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*Major Moses Van Campen*

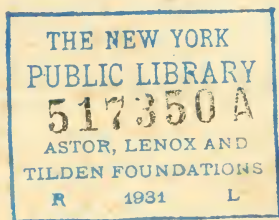
SKETCHES  
OF  
BORDER ADVENTURES,  
IN  
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF  
MAJOR MOSES VAN CAMPEN, *1757-1817*  
*D.C.*

A SURVIVING SOLDIER OF THE REVOLUTION.

BY HIS GRANDSON,  
*Ver*  
JOHN N. HUBBARD, A. B. *1815-1897.*  
*D.C.*

BATH, N. Y.:  
R. L. UNDERHILL & CO.

*4*  
1842.  
*101*



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Printed by GEORGE W. STEVENS,  
Danville, N. Y.

## PREFACE.

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It may, perhaps, be due to the reader, to state some of the reasons why another book should make its appearance in public, to claim a share of the attention, which is paid to whatever is new.

The author will render his excuse in due form and present also the authority, upon which, rests most of the facts recorded in this work.

MOSES VAN CAMPEN, the subject of this memoir, has long been known by many in this part of the State, and by many also in the State of Pennsylvania, as one who took an active part in the struggles which gave birth to our national independence. Especially is he known for the severe encounters he has had with the Indians, and for the hardships which he has endured in watching for this wary foe, as he made his

sudden and fearful incursions upon what were called the border settlements.

The service which he has thus rendered his country as a soldier, entitle his name to some remembrance among a free and grateful people. But this claim is not presented as a reason for making this offering to the public. It is rather in compliance with the wishes of friends, who have been desirous to preserve some record of the events which are here recorded.

Some apology for this work might be gathered too from considering the fact that, while the leading events of the revolution have been recorded in their proper order, and due credit has been given to those whose office gave them a prominent place in the eye of the public, slight notices only have been made of the services rendered by minor officers, who have held posts of extreme danger and have acquitted themselves in such a manner as to impart dignity to American arms. It is but just, that these also, should receive the honor which is their due, while our countrymen shall hold in sacred remembrance the deeds of those, who, fired with the holy zeal of liberty, have perilled their all in the decision of the single question which has resulted in one of the freest and happiest nations that our earth

has ever beheld. So far as the following pages may accomplish this design, the author hopes that it will receive the approbation of the public.

Another reason, for submitting these pages to the press, arises from the hope that they may give some new interest to the history of our border warfare, and thus prove to be of permanent benefit, by adding one more chapter, to those that have already been written, which shall exhibit, in a slight degree, a few of the hardships and sufferings which were undergone by those, who were engaged in the struggles of the revolution.

The materials of this memoir have been gathered almost entirely from him who is its subject, and the credibility of those facts which rest entirely upon his own authority none will question, who are acquainted in the least with his character.

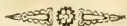
One word in this place about the chapter which has been introduced, giving a brief sketch of the causes which led to the war of the revolution. Some may think it altogether unnecessary, and others, perhaps, presumptuous that a youth should undertake a task to which, the knowledge and experience, which belongs to the age, is only equal. The author would say, in



reference to this, and indeed to the whole work, that it is given to the public with a feeling of unaffected diffidence, and it is only from the encouragement of those who have examined parts of his manuscript, that he dares submit it to the press.

*Danville, August, 1841.*

## SKETCHES, &C.



### CHAPTER I.

*Introduction—birth and parentage—removal of his father—description—story of a relative—character of his mother—school-boy days—anecdote—employments—an adventure—another adventure—his father removes again—Plunket's expedition.*

THE veterans of the revolution are, one by one, fading from our view, and the scenes, which, to them, are but as the things of yesterday, are receding with them beyond the limits of recollection, and will soon be known only by the page of the historian. It were well if we could make their memories our mentors of the past, and be ever able to catch from their lips, the kindling of that flame, which sent its purity and brightness from so many bosoms, in the earlier parts of our history. But time, which has lingered long over the heads of a few hallowed relics of that most sacred era, regardless of its victims, stays not from a work which seems like one of sacrilege, but threatens to sweep from us every living vestige, that would stand as a memorial of our national pride and glory.

In beholding, then, the retiring footsteps of these aged worthies, we can but feel desirous that they should leave behind them some traces of their event-

ful lives, that we may not be left without the means of refreshing our minds with the tales, that used to astonish and delight us in the days of our childhood. To those who have ever listened to any of the stories, as they came, pictured to the life, from the lips of him who is the subject of this narrative, these pages will not be without their interest. For such they are written.

MOSES VAN CAMPEN, the son of Cornelius Van Campen, a respectable farmer of New Jersey, was born in Hunterdon County of that State, January 21, 1757. His paternal ancestors came from Holland to this country, and settled in New Jersey, where they established for themselves the character of industrious and worthy citizens. His mother's name was originally Depee or Depue. She was descended from a family of French Protestants, which fled from the persecutions of the Roman Catholics during the eighteenth century, to this land of religious freedom, and found a home in the State of Pennsylvania.

Her father was a wealthy farmer, who lived on the Delaware river, and was distinguished for an exemplary religious character, as well as for kindness and liberality to the poor. He acted for a number of years as Justice of the Peace, and, in the discharge of his office, he seemed more like a father consulting and settling the differences of a large family, than like the generality of those who administer justice. He never would allow a suit, between any of his neighbors, to come to issue before him, but in almost every instance effected a reconciliation between the parties, without

going through the expensive, and in too many instances, painful steps of a law-suit.

Concerning the other near relatives, from whom Mr. Van Campen might claim his descent not much is known, since no record has been kept but the one in the old family Bible, and all that is there related of them may be summed up in this—they lived and died. We will pass directly therefore to what more immediately concerns our narrative.

Soon after the birth of his son Moses, Mr. Cornelius Van Campen removed to Pennsylvania, and purchased land in Northampton County, on the Delaware river. It was situated a little above what was called the Water Gap. Here Moses spent the years of his childhood, and it may occasion some surprise to say that he can look back to this period, even at the distance of more than three fourths of a century, and gather a distinct and vivid picture from the impressions that were then made on his mind. These scenes are still his familiar friends ; they remain, like the ever-green, to enliven and beautify the winter of his age. The reader may have a description of them very nearly in his own language.

“ The scenes of my boyhood have made a strong impression upon my mind. The old farm house with its grave looking walls, and the barn, where myself and brothers used to play ‘hide and go seek,’ with the thousand little things, that rush in to fill out the picture of my childhood, are so clearly defined in my memory that it sometimes seems almost as though they were in reality before me. A beautiful flat stretched its

broad green apron for miles to the north and south. It had probably been under Indian culture years before, for there were no where to be found upon it, any decayed remains of the forest tree. The Delaware river bounded it on the east, as it came gracefully winding its course around the base of the Blue mountains which arose in many places very abruptly and pleased the eye with a great variety of scenery; while it was skirted on the west by a range of hills that rose gently from the plain and marked out an undulating line on the distant horizon. Here my father lived in the immediate vicinity of my mother's relations, many of whom are still fresh in my recollection. If the reader will listen, I will relate the story of one whom I love to remember, and one to whom my heart returns with a gratitude that wishes to perpetuate his name. It is of Nicholas Depue, Esq., a cousin to my mother, and who, in his day, was extensively known as a man of large estate and of great capacity for business. I love to remember him for the happy influence which he threw around my boyish days. I never entered his house without meeting a smile, that smile seems to meet me yet whenever I think of the man; and the pleasant tones of his voice calling me his 'little Moses' still linger around me like the floating sounds of distant music. So uniform was his disposition that I never recollect to have seen him otherwise than in the most pleasant mood. Yet to this he added the still higher graces of a christian character. He was a man whose piety could never be questioned. This seemed to be the main-spring to all his actions; and



whether at home or abroad, he was governed by the same pure and heavenly principles. In the management of his farm every thing was reduced to the most perfect system ; the hours of labor, of relaxation and religious exercises in his family were all so arranged and so uniformly observed that any one, who knew these might be apprized of what were his engagements at any particular part of the day. The buildings on his farm were mostly of stone, and these were arranged with the same attention to order which characterized every thing that was the product of his mind.--- His domestics never had occasion to interfere with each other, for each had his appropriate labor and his separate apartment, so that every thing within the house went on harmoniously and pleasantly. His kindness to the poor was likewise a prominent trait in his character. They came to him in the time of their want and found him always ready to administer to their real necessities. Many whom he thus assisted he could easily distinguish by their voice, and happening one day to pass by an inn in his neighborhood, he overheard some of them indulging themselves in their boisterous wit, and singing their bar-room songs. He was pained at the conduct of these men, and learning that they were thus accustomed to idle away their time and spend their earnings for that which was worse than useless, he began to question himself as to the propriety of giving to such men, whether it did not tend to encourage them in their vicious habits, and whether he was not chargeable with ministering to their depravity instead of doing them acts of benev-

olence. He therefore resolved to give to them no more. But hearing that some, who were reached by his kindness, belonged to the household of faith, he could no longer withhold his bounty, but continued as before to administer to their necessities. He could not find it in his heart to turn those away, whom, for aught he knew, the Lord had accepted, however unworthy might be their connections. Such was the character of this excellent man, and I can but feel in reviewing it, that the 'memory of the just is blessed.'"

The family of Mr. Van Campen consisted of six sons and four daughters. Moses, the subject of the present memoir, was the oldest; he received his name from his grand-father, Moses Depue. Of his early history but little is known, and that little is gathered from his own lips. It may be expected therefore that such parts of it will be presented as are of the greatest interest, and have made the strongest impression upon his memory. Yet it is not always certain that the events, which have been instrumental in conveying to us the most pleasure or pain, and have occupied the largest share of our feelings and thoughts, would, by being placed before the eye of another, assume near the importance in which they had been held by ourselves. Still there are influences common to all men, which have been gathered around the fire-side of our homes, whose tendency cannot be mistaken, and so far as they have had a permanent effect upon the character it may be well to give them more than a passing notice. Of this kind were the influences



thrown around his early years, by the hand of a tender and affectionate mother ; influences, which, though they may, at the time, have been considered as slight, have continued since to exert their power, and, doubtless, have silently operated to give direction to the whole of his after life.

She was a woman of uncommon energy of character ; yet it was an energy which embraced nothing that did not appropriately belong to her sex. Affectionate and tender, but at the same time decided, she was admirably fitted to mould the youthful mind and give to it, while in its plastic state, touches which would retain their impress, even amid the distracting tumults of life. A better illustration of this could not be given, than in the fact that, from her, he received his earliest impressions of religion ; and though these impressions might seem to have been lost in the rough scenes through which he passed, yet the experience of after years could give ample proof that they still retained their power over his mind. She early instilled into his mind the first principles of truth and taught him to acknowledge the overruling presence of the Supreme Being. Under her tuition were spent the first years of his life until he arrived at the age of nine, when he was sent to a neighboring school. Here he rapidly learned the first rudiments of education and passing from these, his teacher soon found that he was qualified to enter upon the study of surveying. He gained some knowledge of this, as well as the science of Navigation, with the hope of one day gratifying his desire to sail upon the water ; but this

he never accomplished. It may not be out of place to relate here, a little incident belonging to his school boy days.

The boys of his time had a play which they used to call "Throwing at Buck." The stick which was called the Buck ended in three prongs and when placed upon these, it would stand alone. The point of the play was, to see who, by throwing at the top of this, could knock it over the greatest number of times. The boys of the school were nearly equally divided between those who came from up the river, called the upper school and those who came from down the river called the lower school. This game was usually played by dividing into upper and lower school. In these games the upper school party, to which Moses belonged, was generally victorious and this unfortunately gave rise to many unpleasant feelings between the two parties. One side claimed a superiority, which was by no means acknowledged by the other, and their disputes, at length, arose so high that it was determined to try the question of comparative strength by a regular fight. The day of battle was appointed and when it came the boys as they would naturally do, loitered around the school house, until their teacher was out of sight, and then came up, in battle array, to commence their scuffle. Moses was the leader of his party and advanced with his men, with the assurance and ardor of victory. The reception he met with was warm and the scuffle continued for some time doubtful, but at length the upper school began to gain the ascendancy and, in a few

moments, their antagonists fled with the utmost speed and left them sole possessors of the field.

The experience of Moses' school boy days, differs little, perhaps from that of every individual who has been sent to a public school. There are the same strifes and jealousies, defeats and victories, animosities and friendships, which are common to all, and which seem to relieve these days of their monotony and throw around them the life and novelty of an adventure.— Yet the time of Moses' boyhood was not wholly occupied in the school house or in the Academic hall ; and it was well perhaps for the vigor of his frame, that his physical energies were not impaired, by the protracted labor and toil which is sometimes imposed upon the mind ; but that his bodily strength was husbanded, with a care, that seemed almost prophetic of the active life, through which, he was to pass. It is to incidents of a hardy, stirring nature, that he can now turn and it was under these that his character was formed and his mind and body inured to bold and daring habits. A little story which he recollects is one of this nature. He relates of himself as follows :

“ When I was quite young, say from ten to twelve years of age, my father and mother went to meeting on a sabbath in September and left me at home to watch a field of wheat. My business was to watch this field and drive off the pigeons, which came down upon it in such multitudes, that they covered the ground, and threatened to pick up the grain before it could have time to sprout. I obeyed the orders which were given me, and drove off the pigeons till I

became tired of the sport. My efforts to frighten them, seemed to have little or no effect, for as often as I started them up from one side of the field, they would fly a little distance and light down upon the other.— In the midst of my troubles, and while I was thinking what I should do, I remembered my father's gun,— a famous old fowling piece brought from Holland, five or six feet long, which hung up in the house in a place where it was always kept when not in use. With an eagerness natural to children, I ran to the house, without pausing to reflect upon consequences, climbed up by a chair and made out to reach the gun, which was already loaded with a good round charge of powder and pigeon-shot : shouldered it and hastened back anxious to put my new plan upon trial. As I drew near the spot, where the birds were as busy as they could be, in filling their crops, without a thought of danger : I crept carefully up to the fence and, putting the trusty old piece through between the rails I fired away at them bravely. The gun kicked me over. I never had fired one before and had as little thought of being served by it in the way I was, as the poor pigeons I shot at. I had seen my father take sight when he shot, and meaning to do as he did, I put my face down close to the piece just back of the lock, and when I fired, it flew back, knocked me over and raked my nose from end to end. I made havoc however, among the birds ; killing, according to my best recollection, about twenty of them. At first I felt highly gratified : I felt as though I had performed a great exploit. But this feeling did not last long. I soon

began to be troubled, for I knew that my father would not approve of what I had done ; I had taken his gun without liberty and fired it, and a flogging as the consequence began to haunt my imagination. I carried my game to the house and deposited it in the cellar and wished that by some means I might escape detection. But in vain ; my poor nose betrayed me. My mother, in the tenderness of her feelings, would have passed it by, because I was generally obedient and because she knew that when her husband resorted to the rod, it was not to use it lightly. But my sadly scraped nose and the empty gun were two witnesses, which could neither be bribed nor put to silence. The result was a thorough dressing and a charge to take care what I did in the future."

From this time forward, until he was sixteen, the habits of young Van Campen were those of early rising and of hardy industry. Unaccustomed to effeminacies of any kind he grew up with that vigor of constitution, that could brave every inclemency of weather, without suffering the inconvenience of having to pay a rigorous penance for the exposure.

In the fall, when it was the custom to plow the flats for wheat he was accustomed to be up, have his horses harnessed and be ready to start the plow, as soon as it was light enough to trace a furrow. This was the fashion amongst the thriving farmers, in that part of the country, and all the other lads of his age grew up fresh and strong, fitted for every kind of labor, and resolute to carry it on.

He recollects another incident of his youth :—" My



father, when he lived on the Delaware, used to reserve the flat land for the purpose of raising grain, while the hills which bordered it on the west afforded, though uncleared, an abundance of pasture for his cattle. The country being new, deer were often seen sporting or cropping in the woods, or leaping up the sides of the hills, with their tails raised like a white flag, or crossing the cattle-paths with which the forest abounded. Being about fifteen or sixteen years old and eager to handle a gun and try it upon a deer, my father permitted me at one time to carry his loaded rifle when I went after the cows. It was a new thing with me and I felt desirous of having an opportunity to shoot and was not a little solicitous about the event. As I pursued my route through the woods, what should meet my eye but a large, fine buck! He was passing along not far distant, and when he came opposite to where I was, stood perfectly still and looked toward me, with his broad side exposed to my view. I rested my piece across a log and fired. The deer darted furiously away and, in a moment, was out of sight behind the bushes. I was so entirely ignorant of hunting, that I did not know whether I had hit him or not, and made no stay to look after my game, but immediately drove home the cows. My father had heard the report of the rifle, and as soon as he saw me, enquired what I had shot at. I told him, at a deer; but did not know whether I had killed him, or hurt him at all. 'How did he act?' said he. I answered that he leaped into the air, kicked, switched his tail and was out of sight in a moment. My father

was pretty sure, from these signs, that I had hit him and wanted to know if I could conduct him to the place. I told him I could. I therefore accompanied him to the place where we found a tuft of hair lying on the ground. You have hit him said he ; a few steps further and we saw blood and could track him by the blood which had flowed from his wound. A few rods more and there lay the noble animal before our eyes, a slaughtered victim. This was the first deer I had ever killed, the first indeed I had ever shot at. I felt myself a man at once and nothing would do but I must carry a quarter to our neighbor Mr. Shoemaker, a connection of my mother by marriage. As soon as it was dressed I shouldered it and marched off, carrying it with a light and joyous heart to his house, happy to be the bearer of the important present myself. I arrived quickly at his door and he accosted me rather abruptly with—‘What have you there on your shoulder?’ ‘A leg of a deer, sir,’ said I. ‘Why,’ said he, ‘you will be prosecuted and sent to jail. Squire Depue is in the house and if he gets his eye upon you, you will be brought up and tried for killing a deer contrary to law. Run with it into the kitchen : take care don’t let him see you on any account.’ My high feelings dropped in an instant. I felt cheap enough. The idea of being sent to jail for breaking the law alarmed me very much and I hastened home as fast as possible. The fact was I had shot my buck at a time of the year, when the law did not allow deer to be killed. The law authorised the hunting of them between the first of July and the first of January : I



had killed mine in June and was therefore liable to a prosecution. My alarm died away and I felt myself a man again and justly entitled, as I thought to the high distinction of being the sole owner of a rifle. I had fired but two shots at any kind of game in my life in both of which I had done execution. One of my shots, however, I did not speak of very often. I had grown to be nearly a man in size and was able to make such a plea for myself as induced my father to buy me one. I was now sixteen years of age, the possessor in fee simple of a rifle and disposed, of course, to use it as soon as a fair opportunity should be presented. Early in the winter when the snow had fallen sufficiently deep to enable me to track a deer, I sallied forth into the woods and after traversing them awhile discovered three, the leader a doe, the other two her fawns following in her footsteps. I aimed at the foremost but made a wild shot and hit the hindmost. That part of the story I kept to myself, and carried home my fawn, thinking that I should make a fortunate hunter, for I had shot but three times and killed every time, and a fortunate hunter was in my estimation no unimportant personage."

By his frequent adventures with the gun, young Van Campen was making himself familiar with the rifle and he thus became acquainted also with the nature of the country, learned the forest paths, and could trace out each hiding place in the dark recesses of his native hills. Yet this was not the only kind of training he received ; his duties as a farmer imposed upon him a life of activity and toil and not unfrequently,

as will appear from the following narration, exposed him to circumstances of real danger and trial. It was the custom of the farmers who lived on the Delaware above the Water Gap to convey the wheat, which they raised in great abundance, down on the river to Philadelphia, to be there sold. For this purpose they used large boats, called Durham boats, which would carry ten or twelve tons a-piece. Wheat was their staple and they depended much on getting it safely into market.

“In one of the late freshets in the spring of '70 my father in company with a Mr. Shoemaker fitted out a boat which was manned by myself, young Mr. Shoemaker, and four others including the pilot.—A negro belonging to Mr. Shoemaker's family was one of the number. He had never been down the river before and was much attracted by the novelty of a ride upon the water. When every thing was ready we pushed from the shore and was soon moving along at a merry rate down the river. We passed along very pleasantly, with little else of variety than every now and then a good natured joke and a hearty laugh from old Simon, the negro, until we came in sight of the Trenton Falls. Here our pilot began to express some fears about a safe passage, and remarking that the river had fallen very much within a few hours past he said, “boys keep your eye out, for we shall have a pretty close rub here.”

The Trenton Falls were rapids where the main body of the water divided off to the right and left and ran between a ledge of rocks, the one called the out-

side, the other, the inside gap. It was quite dangerous to pass over these falls at high water but extremely so, when the water was low.

We therefore watched our boat with great anxiety, as she began to move faster and faster, borne on by the rapid. Every heart beat quick as she entered the gap ; when she had passed about half way through she struck a rock. A plank was knocked in ; the boat leaked very fast and we were in imminent danger of losing our whole cargo if not our lives.

During the height of our perils and while we were struggling as in a case of life and death old Simon cried out to young Shoemaker to pray. ‘Young massa pray,’ said he, ‘we all get drowned ; you *never* pray ; time you begin *now* ; if old massa here, *he* pray for us.’ What the effect was upon young Shoemaker, I cannot tell, but I know it struck me forcibly at the time, and perhaps it had some influence to make us feel our dependence upon a higher than human power for success. At all events we worked hard, run the boat ashore and were successful in saving most of our wheat ; we did not make our fortunes, however, by the trip.”

Among adventures like these, Moses spent the early years of his life ; and it was through their influence, together with a naturally bold and daring mind, that he acquired a love for enterprises, attended with danger, and he was thus led, insensibly almost, to form a character, admirably suited to the scenes, which attended his after years. Yet it will not be expected, neither indeed would it be desirable, that

every little event of his early history should be recorded ; enough will be said perhaps, if the reader is permitted to share in some of the incidents and be able to trace some of the influences which have, step by step, gained upon the character, until the ascendancy has been won and the individual marked, by their own peculiar impress.

The influences which surrounded young Van Campen while his mind was yet in its forming state, were such as are common to every newly settled country.

In a newly settled region there seems to be something which tends invariably, to develop strong points of character. Removed from the ease and luxury which abound in communities, where a long attention to the arts, which administer comfort, has multiplied the means of enjoyment, the individual is thrown more upon his own resources and is obliged to devise expedients for the gratification of his wants. He is obliged also to meet with difficulties, which are not to be found in societies, where the way is smoothed by the labor of a thousand hands. The mind is summoned to encounter these and its energies are strengthened by each successive struggle. Under such influences a strong mind will become more resolute it will be fertile of invention, bold and decided in action. Of such a school Moses could reap the full benefits, for, from infancy he was thrown under its discipline.

Not satisfied with his residence on the Delaware, his father made a purchase of land in company with his brother in the valley of Wyoming intending, if circumstances should permit to make this his residence.

The fame of this valley had been widely circulated among the inhabitants of Pennsylvania. It was styled the most beautiful land in the world, and, in fertility of soil, it was said to exceed any portion of earth, that had ever before been subjected to cultivation. Such being the representations made of this valley, it was thought to be an object of no small importance to obtain possession of a part of so delightful a portion of earth ; and, though the right to its disposal was still unsettled between the States of Connecticut and Pennsylvania, Mr. Van Campen ventured to purchase under the title of his own state and, in the spring of 1769, took his son Moses with him to cultivate his newly purchased farm. The other members of his family he left at home, thinking it unsafe to introduce them to what was then, and which continued to be, many years after, a scene of the greatest strife.

This valley had been a subject of dispute between those two States ever since the year 1753, when the idea of planting a colony there, was first entertained by the people of Connecticut, under the belief that it was justly included within the grant of James I., in 1620, to the old Plymouth Colony. The company formed for this purpose, called the Susquehannah Company was immediately opposed by another, which was formed by the Pennsylvanians, called the Delaware Company, who maintained that the grant from Charles II. to William Penn, covered the claim of Connecticut. Each company strove, at first, to obtain the Indian title, but Connecticut, gaining the



advantage here ; Pennsylvania sent her case to England and received, from the Attorney General, a decision in her favor. Connecticut also obtained opinions from eminent jurists, which were equally favorable, and the question, not appearing as though it would terminate in a peaceful settlement, each seemed disposed to maintain its own right by forcibly repelling every encroachment of the other. One party retained possession of the soil until the other could accumulate a sufficient force to drive it away ; and this, in turn, would hold its sway until it was compelled to yield to the superior numbers and power of the opposing Company. Under such a state of things there was but little encouragement for the farmer to labor, for the seed which he would commit to the earth in the spring, might multiply a thousand fold, but the reward of his toil be reaped by hands other than his own. Mr. Van Campen, therefore, not wishing to dwell in a scene of perpetual turmoil and uncertainty, relinquished, for the present, the idea of cultivating the beautiful land of Wyoming and having disposed of his farm on the Delaware, removed with his family, in the year 1773, to Northumberland county on the west branch of the Susquehanna, and here purchased a tract of land which was situated on Fishing Creek, eight miles above its junction with that river.

Moses was now in his seventeenth year, and, thrown into a territory abounding with every variety of game, he was allured more than ever to the use of his rifle. Wild turkeys and deer were to be found,

in almost every direction, in the upland woods which bordered on the flats, and it afforded him the greatest pastime to spend the hours, that were not employed in the duties of the farmer, in following these, over hill and dale, until he had become richly laden with the fruits of the chase. The exercise was healthful and pleasant ; it served to expand and strengthen his frame, while it made him perfectly acquainted with the face of the country over which he traveled. In these excursions through the woods, he often fell in company with parties of Indians, who visited this region for the purpose of hunting. They frequently came from their settlements, which were scattered along the waters of the Genesee and encamping here, would spend several weeks in amassing the spoils of the chase. In his intercourse with the Indians he became acquainted, among others, with a chief belonging to the Seneca tribe, named Tom Shenop. He was a distinguished hunter as well as warrior, had a noble and dignified appearance and was, at the same time, so easy in his manners that Moses soon formed with him a familiar acquaintance. He was invited to his camp and often hunted with him during the day, and would stay with him over night. In these hunts, Moses would always find him to be his superior ; and became anxious to know how it was that Shenop should excel him, so much, in killing the deer. He therefore inquired of the old chief, one day, how much he would ask, to instruct him in the art of hunting the deer. The chief replied that he would do so, for a quart of rum ; but when Moses agreed to



pay him this, he refused to tell him, before he brought the rum. When the rum was handed to him, Shenop said, "Well, now I tell you. You get up early, *very* early in the morning, go to the head of little streams—there deer *feed*; walk *slow*—look *sharp*, *bime by* you see him—then *shoot close* and you *kill* him—that's all."

Nothing of any great interest or importance seems to have occurred in young Van Campen's life, during the two years immediately following his coming into Northumberland county, excepting events connected with the chase. These were numerous; and so ardently did he engage in the practise of his chosen sport, that in this time, he became a perfect master of the rifle and thoroughly acquainted with the best grounds for its use. With this means of preparation he was approaching the hour when hostilities were to commence between the American Colonies and the troops of Britain.

At about this time, 1775, the old feuds, which existed between the rival Companies, that were interested in settling the Valley of Wyoming, arose to their height. The contest, which had hitherto been confined almost entirely to fists and clubs, now brought them to the more serious trial of fire arms. Blood was shed; and, as the enjoyment of a few years of peace, had given to each party, an opportunity to extend its numbers; what had hitherto been considered only as a quarrel between a few individuals, began now, to present the appearance of a civil war. It was at a time too, when every arm should have

been nerved in defending the common cause of the whole country, instead of wasting its energies by internal dissensions and conflicts.

Notwithstanding the efforts of Congress to prevent, by the interposition of its authority, the effusion of blood, the Pennsylvanians determined to send a sufficient force against Wyoming, to drive the opposite party from its borders. For this purpose a company was raised to march under the direction of Col. Plunket, and as Mr. Van Campen was one of the proprietors he was called upon, by the other owners, to enlist in this enterprise. Being young and fond of adventure, Moses besought his father that he might go and supply his place ; and, his request being granted, he set out, with a joyful heart to join the expedition.

The company consisted of about seven hundred men who were provided with arms, provisions and military stores, which were carried up the river in a large boat, while the little army marched, in company with this along the shore. It commenced its march about the first of December, but, as its progress was regulated very much by that of the boat, it proceeded slowly ; since this was impeded in many places by the rapidity of the current and by meeting with ice, which was found floating in the river. On the twenty-fourth of December, the troops arrived at the foot of Nanticoke Falls, which are a little below the outlet of the Wyoming Valley. Here the river was found to be so full of ice that it was next to impossible to ascend the falls, and Plunket ordering the boats to stop, directed his men to take with them, in knapsacks, a

small supply of provisions and march directly for Fort Wyoming. Leaving therefore, a small party to guard the boat, he proceeded with his men up the river. Before advancing far, they came in view of an abrupt point of Shawanese mountain, which extended down towards the river and presented to them a rough and precipitous front. Approaching this, they found that it was strongly fortified, and as they came near, the settlers rose from behind a rampart, which they had constructed, and discharged at them, a volley of musketry. Though this fire did little or no harm, it sent a sudden panic through Plunket's troops, who, frightened by this unexpected visitation, immediately retreated to a point beyond their reach. Here they held a consultation upon the measures best to be pursued under their present difficulties.

It was apparent that the colonists had anticipated their coming and had prepared themselves for a gallant defense. To drive them from their fortifications would be a hazardous undertaking and to march into the Valley through the defile, under their rampart, would be to expose themselves to a most fearful loss. The only course left for them, seemed to be to cross the river and march into the Valley on the other side. This they resolved to do ; and having brought with them a batteau, they conveyed it by land above the falls and determined, with this, to plant themselves on the opposite side of the river. Plunket was in the first boat that started across ; but it was found that the settlers had anticipated them here, also, for, before they had reached the opposite shore, they

were fired upon from an ambuscade, and one of their men was killed. Plunket immediately ordered the boat to be steered down the river and as many as possible to lie down, that they might escape the fire of the enemy. In this position they steered directly down the falls and reached their foot in safety. The fire from the ambuscade was returned by Plunket's men, who remained on the western shore: they saw that the firing proceeded from the bushes on the opposite side, and discharging their guns into these, killed one of the colonists, named Bowen.

Plunket's army was again in consultation. It appeared that the obstacles, which they would be obliged to surmount, were greater than they had anticipated; what they had supposed would be easy of conquest, they now find that they can gain only by a severe, protracted, and, it may be, doubtful struggle. They are not prepared for a long siege, or for any very hazardous encounter, and as winter was threatening soon to close the waters of the river to navigation, it was thought best to return without making any further attempts to force their way into the Valley. In accordance with this resolution they commenced their march homeward and found it much easier to go down the river than it was to go up.

Though in this expedition young Van Campen held no conspicuous place or performed no daring exploit, still it may have proved to be of some advantage, since it gave him a knowledge of a few of the dangers and hardships which attend the camp; and, as he was permitted at one time to hear the noise of the bullet,

as it whizzed by him ; he was enabled to judge whether there was any thing in its sound so terrifying, as forever to make him shun the field of battle. Such a decision, at this time, it was important to make ; for the hour had come, when there was to be little room, for the indulgence of private animosity or sectional caprice, since one voice was whispering in the ears of all, bidding them

“ Strike—for their altars and their fires—  
God—and their native land.”



## CHAPTER II.

*A brief review of the causes leading to the American Revolution—Mr. Van Campen enters the field.*

THE American Revolution forms a grand epoch in the world's history. That a nation should spring up, as if by magic, amid the forests of a new continent, and be able, even in its infancy, to wage a successful warfare against the disciplined troops of one of the mightiest powers, which the earth ever saw and that it should, to the astonishment of all, extort from so proud a realm, the seal of its declared independence are facts, so glaring, that they seem almost to shut out from the mind, the light of other history, and claim for themselves the exclusive right of being known to the world.

But did not these facts lay claim to our attention from the interest which they of themselves would naturally excite, the important bearing which they must have, in deciding the future destiny of our race. will cause them ever to be regarded with an attentive and scrutinizing eye. On this account they will be viewed with increasing interest so long as our nation continues to advance in all of those arts, which conduce to private happiness and public prosperity. And should we, as a nation, ever have the high distinction of establishing it as a principle never to be questioned, that an enlightened people may govern themselves,



the several steps, which should bring the world to this conviction would be most attentively and seriously examined ; so that every page of our history will be likely to receive a most eager and searching glance, from those who would inquire into the philosophy of government, or into the secret of national happiness.

To the American, these facts are his life-blood : they are the soul, which leaps into his veins and which nerves him to noble and manly deeds. Should he ever allow them to escape his recollection? He should as soon think of declining the honor of being styled a citizen, of this happy republic. Let not this part of history then, be lightly passed over ; but let the youth dwell upon it, as the angel which smiles on his pathway, let infancy be taught to lisp its accents, that declining age may repose itself beneath the mild bow of promise, which will thus be thrown upon the page that shall record the future glory of his country.

No apology need be given therefore for a brief review of the causes leading to the war of the Revolution, which resulted in the establishment of our National Independence.

By the bold and daring spirit of Christopher Columbus, who, in the latter part of the fifteenth century, was seized with a peculiar and, as many thought, foolish passion for sailing west, a new world was opened to the enterprise of Europe—that world, America. Various parts of this were visited by adventurers who were brought hither either by the desire of gratifying their avarice, or that they might satisfy the promptings of an unbounded curiosity.

But the most interesting settlements in this country, were those which were made by colonists, chiefly from England, who left the land of their nativity that they might enjoy, in the bosom of a wilderness, the religious freedom, which was denied them at home.

Among these, were our fathers : men who had the rare virtue of preferring principle to property ; their religion, to life. Men who, with their wives and little ones, chose rather to encounter the wild storm, upon a newly traversed ocean, and the hardships of an uncultivated soil, than be compelled to violate the simple dictates of their consciences.

With a strength of purpose which has never been surpassed, they rent asunder the ties which bound them to their homes, crossed the mighty deep, and here and there, studded the American shore, with that living energy, which changed the wilderness into a garden, and the forest tree to the temple of God.—Famine and cold, sickness and death, would have chilled the purposes of men of less ardor in virtue ; but, when concentrating their malignant fire upon these men, they seemed only to quicken the flame of their piety, and add new strength to their heaven-born confidence. Soon the wild beast quietly resigned to them his former resting place, and savage man was willing to view in the distance, the magic power, which had come upon the land of his forefathers.

Thus were founded the colonies of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island, to which was given the general title of New England.—

To these were afterwards added those of Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, the Carolinas and Georgia.

These colonies, though planted under the authority of the crown of England, and, by their charters, made to acknowledge the supremacy of their mother country, yet the form of government in each, was very much regulated by the peculiar circumstances under which it was founded and assumed the character that belonged to its early settlers.

The majority of them being religious communities, any violation of the rules of justice, would naturally fall more or less under the church discipline, so that their forms of civil government would be very apt to partake of those which regulated them as religious bodies. The form of their church government was congregational ; and should the same be transferred to matters of State, it would make them purely Democratic. Such was the fact, especially in respect to the colonies of New England. They met in a body to consult for their wants as religious communities ; and, since their spiritual interests were more or less connected with temporal affairs, it would be a transition, as easy as it was natural, for them to use the same method of consulting upon matters pertaining to the welfare of the State. In these consultations, there was the utmost freedom in the expression of their sentiments, and the burden imposed upon them, by the regulations which they thought it necessary to make, was easy, since it was laid on them by their own hands.

The great distance of these colonies from their mother land, and the comparative insignificance of a few inhabitants, thrown into the bosom of a boundless wilderness, where every thing wore the appearance of poverty and famine, were the means of securing to them a long possession of their chosen retreat. With the exception of an occasional encounter with the red man of the forest, who was sometimes lashed into a fury, at seeing his hunting grounds gradually removing from him, the emigrant maintained the uninterrupted enjoyment of his integrity ; and his character strengthened by toil and an exposure to danger, soon acquired that native dignity and independence, which so emphatically belongs to the soil of freedom. Being thus left, almost entirely, to himself ; and, by necessity, becoming acquainted with the rude forms of legislation, it were not strange, should he acquire a taste for governing himself, and gradually become removed from the restraints of a foreign power.

A few years of industry and frugality multiplied upon the colonists the means of living ; and after supplying their own wants, from the productions of their soil, they find that they have something left for the purposes of trade. There is opened a communication between them and their mother land, which soon becomes of so much importance to England that she thinks it worth while to pass regulations, by which she engrosses the whole of their commerce to herself. Though most of these restrictions proved to be sufficiently advantageous, yet many of them were the cause of much detriment to the colonies and were

justly felt by them, to be unusually rigorous and severe. Yet these were borne with becoming patience, for the Americans acknowledged the right of the British Parliament to pass bills, which should regulate the commerce between both countries, so that whatever advantage could be secured to their native land by this means, they were willing to allow, as a just recompense for the protection which it extended to them.

But there was one part of legislation which they regarded as belonging peculiarly to themselves as subjects of the British crown, and of this right they were exceedingly tenacious—it was the right of taxation; and upon this arose the chief differences which resulted in the final separation of the two countries from each other.

The peace of Paris in 1763, which secured to the English the possessions of France in America, having been gained by a large expenditure of money and the accumulation of an immense debt, the Ministers of the Treasury began to look around them, for the means of meeting the great demands that were made upon the British purse. In making this survey, their eye rested upon the American colonies; these, said they, are growing rich and shall they not assist in bearing the burdens of their mother-land? But the colonies had not been inactive themselves in the late struggles, which had brought signal honor to British arms, and it might be questioned whether they did not deserve some remuneration for the part, which they had performed, in hastening the return of peace



to their native country. Yet so far were the British Ministry from entertaining any idea like this, that their whole attention was directed toward some plan for drawing a revenue from the people of America.

The possessions of France, having been given into their hands, they had nothing to fear, from the influence of her power in this country, and they could, therefore, adopt the most rigorous measures with their colonies, while these appeared wholly unable to offer any effectual resistance. But these colonies had hitherto been permitted to think and act for themselves—they had been accustomed to levy their own taxes, and to support their own government ; it was very natural, therefore, for them to suppose, that, upon questions of so much interest to them, they had a right to be consulted and should be permitted to exercise their own choice. Yet this right was taken into the hands of others, for they were notified by a resolution of the British Parliament, that “it might be thought necessary for the purpose of further defraying the expenses of protecting the Colonies, to charge *certain stamp duties* upon them.”

The Americans received this resolution with a spirit of the deepest concern ; they saw in it the commencement of a course of taxation which might never cease, and the news of it spread so rapidly through the colonies, that it became almost the only topic of conversation and debate ; it was every day canvassed, and as the discussion proceeded the opposition to it became more marked, until the common voice of the people seemed to be arrayed against it.



It was while these enquiries were advancing, that the colonies were harassed by the operation of a law, made for the purpose of hindering the practice of smuggling, which had been found to increase about in the same proportion with their commerce.

By this law, the commanders of vessels stationed on the coast of England and even those destined for the American shores, being enjoined to perform the duties of revenue officers, indiscriminately seized and confiscated cargoes that were prohibited and those that were not. An attempt to obtain redress for the wrongs thus committed, was attended with a trouble and expense, which were quite equal to the injury sustained, so that it proved to be a regulation most ruinous to the commerce of the colonies.

While they were ill at ease from the inconvenience thus occasioned, a proposal to lay upon them a tax without their own consent, presented an evil, in comparison with which, all others seemed to be quite insignificant. Strenuous measures were, therefore, taken to resist a bill, which they considered contrary to ancient usages, as well as to the manifest dictates of justice.

The press caught the spirit of the populace and served to spread, more widely, and give permanence to the fears already excited, while the voice of the public speaker imparted to them a tone and energy which they had never before possessed.

Yet, notwithstanding the opposition, which the bare mention of it was known to have aroused in America, Mr. George Grenville, who was at the head of the

Treasury, prepared the Stamp Bill and introduced it into Parliament, in February, 1765.

At no previous time, perhaps, was the public mind ever raised to a higher pitch of excitement than upon this occasion. The eyes of the whole commercial world being directed towards the course which Parliament would take in reference to this agitated question, it could not be passed, by a vote given only in silence ; but demanded a long and animated discussion, and never perhaps did the halls of Parliament witness a greater display of learning, than that which graced it at this period.

But eloquence, never so powerful and impressive, could have little effect in changing the previous determination of the Ministry, who were already pledged to their purpose, and would not be driven from it, by arguments the most convincing. The powerful appeals which fell upon their ears, had little influence, in altering their designs ; they urged forward their odious measure until it passed and became a law for the colonies.

Scarcely can we at this distance of time, imagine the feelings of our forefathers, when the news of its passage came to their ears. Yet we have evidences sufficient to assure us, that the sorrow and indignation, which filled their hearts, were too much for the peaceful flow of their usually quiet lives. The current of their emotions, which had hitherto glided along in stillness and harmony, suddenly swelled into a mighty torrent, which broke away from its accustomed channel and expended itself amid scenes, which

in ordinary times, would have been branded with the names of *confusion* and *riot*, since the common barriers of law and of order seemed to offer but a feeble resistance to the tide of popular sentiment. In all of the chief provinces, especially in Massachusetts, the expressions of disapproval were of the most decided character. In some, the Stamp officers were burned in effigy ; in others, their dwellings were broken open and their property destroyed, while through New York, it was cried, with stentorian voice, "The Folly of England and the Ruin of America."

The minds of the colonists were at such an ebb of excitement, that they could easily be moved to almost any extent, in their opposition to what they justly considered, an infringement of their rights. The presence of some daring and gifted mind was only necessary to give direction to the elements, that were in commotion and shape them toward their proper destiny. At this crisis there arose a spirit of lofty bearing, which seemed fitted to ride amidst the storm, and, in the hour of the greatest peril, preserve a serenity of mind, which gave to its decisions the appearance of having come from the unruffled bosom of quiet life.

Such a mind was Patrick Henry's as he stood before the House of Burgesses in Virginia, and presented his famous resolutions upon the Stamp Act.—These declared in simple and concise terms, the rights of the colonies, to which they were entitled, as having been citizens of Great Britain, the right guarantied to them by charters, and

the inseperable relation between taxes and representation.

So bold were these resolutions, that they were strenuously opposed by many who were afterwards foremost in the scenes of the Revolution, yet, being supported, as his biographer states, by an overwhelming torrent of eloquence from Mr. Henry, and ably seconded by the cool, deliberate reasoning of Mr. Johnston, they passed by a bare majority. His closing resolution succeeded only by one vote and in the support of this, Mr. Henry displayed his wonderful power over the mind. Feeling that, if carried at all, it must be carried by storm, he summoned the deep and mighty energies of his mind for the conflict, and commencing in his usually awkward style, then rising into grace and dignity as the tide of his eloquence began to flow, he soon brought his hearers, by the rapidity of his conceptions, to enchanted ground, where reason, if it were not convinced, was compelled, for awhile at least, to yield its assent. It was in the midst of this bold and impressive speech that Mr. Henry closed one of his periods with—"Cæsar had his Brutus—Charles the First his Cromwell—and George the Third —" "Treason!" cried the Speaker, "treason?" "treason," echoed from all parts of the house. Without faltering in the least, he assumed a loftier attitude, and in a deeper and more impressive tone added, "*may profit by their example!* If this be treason make the most of it." [Wirt's life of Patrick Henry.]

These resolutions, issuing from the heart of Vir-

ginia, together with the spirit shown in Massachusetts, set on fire the intervening territory, and so general and determined was the opposition to this Bill of the British Parliament, that when the time arrived for the diffusion of Stamped paper, it had all, in some wonderful manner disappeared, and there were no where to be found those, who would spread it through the community.

The colonists being cut off, by the operation of this Bill, from a commerce with their mother country, and being in this way deprived of many of the necessities of life, began, with a truly independant spirit, to look to themselves for the supply of those articles which they had formerly obtained only by trade.—The most wealthy citizens cheerfully laid aside their imported cloth, and prided themselves in the homely apparel of their own manufacture. Thus the colonies became almost entirely weaned from the land of their nativity ; they regarded it no longer, with those tender and respectful feelings, which they had always cherished towards it, as the home of their fathers, but began to view it with a suspicious eye, as having already encroached upon their liberties.

They did not wish, however, to be disloyal or to resist, in any improper way, measures which they considered dangerous to their ancient and established rights. It was not natural to break away immediately from their accustomed habits of thought, and upon every occasion, therefore, when dissatisfaction was expressed with the present Acts of the British Government, there were heard, at the



same time, protestations of attachment to the throne of England and to constitutional liberty. They resorted to petitions and to every other means within their power of seeking for a return of their former prosperity. Many in England also favored this desire and were equally anxious that the colonies might be restored to their ancient rights and privileges, for it was found that the British commerce had greatly diminished, so that many of the London merchants were obliged to close their business at a great sacrifice, and the manufacturing interests too, were materially affected, since many establishments had ceased their operations and hundreds of workmen had been thrown out of employ to become idle and clamorous citizens.

There were many, therefore, who became anxious for the repeal of the Stamp Act, and who, as soon as Parliament was convened, presented their memorials, beseeching the exercise of a different policy.

At one of the sessions of Parliament, our venerable Franklin, who was present, was called upon to give his views of the subject under consideration, and, though it may be carrying us too much into detail, yet, as his remarks present in a most concise form the point at issue between the two countries, many will review them with pleasure.

“The Americans,” said he, “already pay a tax on all estates, real and personal; a poll tax; a tax on all offices, professions, trades and businesses, according to their profits; an excise on all wine, rum and other spirits; and a duty of ten pounds on all negroes



imported ; with some other duties. The assessments upon all real and personal estates amount to eighteen pence in a pound ; and those upon the profits of employments to half a crown. The colonists could not in any way pay the Stamp duty ; there is not gold and silver enough in all the colonies, to pay the Stamp duty even for one year. The Germans who inhabit Pennsylvania are more dissatisfied with this duty than the native colonists themselves.

“ The Americans, since the late news, have abated much of their affection for Great Britain, and of their respect for Parliament.

“ There exists a great difference between internal and external duties ; duties laid on commodities imported have no other effect than to raise the price of these articles in the American market ; they make, in fact, a part of this price ; but it is optional with the people either to buy them or not, and consequently either to pay the duty or not. But an internal tax is forced from the people without their own consent, if not laid by their own representatives. The Stamp Act says, we shall have no commerce, make no exchange of property with each other, neither purchase, nor grant, nor recover debts, we shall neither marry, nor make our wills, unless we pay such and such sums ; and thus it is intended to extort our money from us, or ruin us by the consequences of refusing to pay it. The American colonies could in a short time find in their own manufactures the means of sufficing to themselves.

“ The repeal of the Stamp Act would restore

tranquility, and things would resume their pristine course."

These sentiments from a man so universally respected, as Mr. Franklin, had a powerful influence upon the minds of those, in whose hearing they were spoken. But the former Ministry had come prepared to sustain their measures with a learning and eloquence which rendered it quite doubtful, whether or no, the Bill would be repealed. George Grenville, in its support, declares with an impressive manner—"A solemn law has been enacted in Parliament, already a year since. It was then and still is the duty of the Ministers to carry it into effect. The Constitution declares, that to suspend a law, or the execution of a law, by royal authority and without consent of Parliament, is felony; in defiance of which this law has been suspended—has been openly resisted—but did I say resisted? Your delegates are insulted, their houses are pillaged; even their persons are not secure from violence; and, as if to provoke your patience, you are mocked and braved under the mouths of your artillery."

William Pitt, with the dignity of years spent in the service of his country, rises and, in the midst of a most powerful and impressive speech replies to this—"I hear it said that America is obstinate. America is almost in open rebellion. I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of people, so dead to all the feelings of liberty, as voluntarily to submit to be slaves would have been fit instruments to make slaves of ourselves. The honorable gentleman has said also, for he

has been fluent in words of bitterness, that America is ungrateful : he boasts of his bounties towards her : but are not these bounties intended finally for the benefit of this kingdom ? And how is it true that America is ungrateful ? Does she not voluntarily hold a good correspondence with us ? The profits to Great Britain, from her commerce with the colonies, are two millions a year. This is the fund that carried you triumphantly through the last war. The estates that were rented at two thousand pounds a year, seventy years ago, are at three thousand pounds at present. You owe this to America. This is the price she pays for your protection."

In conclusion he gave it as his opinion that the Stamp Act should be repealed ; "absolutely, totally and immediately ;" but at the same time that the sovereign authority of England over the colonies should be asserted in as strong terms as could be devised. In accordance with this opinion the Stamp Act was repealed ; accompanied with a declaration of the right of Parliament to legislate for the colonies in all cases whatsoever.

The news of its repeal, though attended with this additional clause, was hailed in America with the demonstrations of universal joy. The sober citizen received it as a token of the happy return of former quiet and prosperity ; while to the factious it afforded an opportunity of gratifying his wayward disposition, by a change of excitement.

Yet, amid the ebullition of joy, which it occasioned ; the careful observer might have beheld a secret

animosity rankling within the breasts of many, which even this change for the better was not sufficient to overcome ; for the seeds of discontent had taken such a deep root within the minds of the colonists, that they were not to be eradicated by any slight or temporary display of kindness, on the part of their mother-land.

In Great Britain too, there are the same feelings of rancor, at seeing the pride and power of legislation, bow to the turbulent spirit of a few rebellious subjects ; and there were many who were interested in keeping up a feeling of animosity between the two countries, and who were not idle in spreading the elements of discord.

Thus, in the one country, though the flame of opposition had apparently died away, the materials of combustion yet remained, and were ready, upon the first occasion to burst forth into a fiercer blaze ; in the other, there existed a haughty and severe spirit, that was ready to treat, with the utmost rigor, the least departure from humility and submission. Under such circumstances, the most trivial event often leads to the widest differences, and things, which, at an ordinary period, would be considered as of slight importance, assume a magnitude not their own and cause decisions which may well surprize the deliberate judgement of after times. But, to a people jealous of its liberties, the slightest invasion of right may not be unimportant, for it may be the turning point between freedom and slavery.

It were not to be expected, therefore, that the

colonies should remain for any great length of time, without some new occasion of difference in respect to the policy of their mother-land.

A just cause for alarm makes its appearance, in a proposal to Parliament, of charging duties on paper, tea, glass &c., upon their introduction to this country. It contained also a provision for the support of the officers of government among the colonies, to be paid out of the revenue raised from these duties, making them independent of the people, and giving them the tenure of their office, not during good behaviour, but during the pleasure of the King.

It provided further, for a set of Custom House officers and, as if to crown it with enormity, ordered that the cases, in which these were opposed in the discharge of their duty, should not be tried in America, but in England ; so that, with surprise, the colonists view themselves pursued, though under a different form, with the same measures that had been met by them with such signal resistance.

This new regulation was immediately opposed by the most spirited measures. Committees of correspondence were formed in all the provinces and leagues made to abstain from the purchase of any article which was infected with the charge of a duty. Equal spirit was manifested by the government to enforce its decisions and maintain its authority. The citizens of Boston, who had been notorious for their opposition to the proceedings of Parliament, were ordered to be placed under the especial care of a regiment of soldiers ; and General Gage commander of the British



forces in America, while executing this injunction, hearing that a little difficulty had occurred between some of the people and the revenue officers added another regiment to the care of the Bostonians.

With loaded muskets the troops march on shore and parade themselves up and down the streets. They assume haughty and disdainful airs, as though they were in the midst of a vanquished people, and wantonly insult the citizens as they pass. They take possession of the State House and change the halls of legislation into the unseemly offices of a camp. The sweetness of repose falls a prey to the noise of the drum and fife and the sacred hours of the temple of God are desecrated by the sounds of war. Taunt succeeds taunt until an infuriated mass of citizens, fall upon a company of soldiers, beat them with clubs and pelt them with balls of snow; guns are fired in return, four are killed and several wounded.

Such are the scenes which transpire at Boston and which send from the colonies a united voice of indignation and remonstrance.

From their earnest petition and the intercession of their friends in England, an attempt was made to repeal all of the laws for raising a revenue in America. It was successful in part; a repeal was made upon all the articles excepting the one on tea, and this was retained only from an obstinate desire to establish a principle which the Americans were as firmly determined to oppose.

The inhabitants of all the colonies, therefore, bound themselves by a solemn league to discontinue

the importation and use of tea ; and in consequence of this the ware-houses of the East India Company, in London, became stored with it in great quantities ; but, encouraged by the government, they appointed their consignees and shipped much of it to this country.

The most prompt and energetic measures were immediately taken, in the several colonies, to prevent its being landed ; and it found no place of reception in Philadelphia and New York. That which was shipped to the southern colonies, was stored in damp ware-houses, and left to perish ; while that brought into the harbor of Boston, met with a more speedy consumption.

Immediately upon the arrival of the vessel, which contained it, the citizens held a crowded meeting, at which it was resolved, “ that it should not be landed, that no duty should be paid upon it, and that it should be returned in the same vessel.” They placed a guard to prevent its being landed, and, after, giving the commander a sufficient opportunity to return ; it happened one day that a company, to all appearance savages, came unexpectedly into the street, and proceeding to the wharf where the ship lay, boarded it, and taking up the noxious article, quietly poured it over the sides of the vessel into the water. Crowds of citizens were spectators of the scene and, after beholding the tea so satisfactorily disposed of, peaceably returned to their homes and every thing remained as tranquil as though nothing had happened.

The conduct of the Bostonians, on this occasion provoked the displeasure of the British nation. They

were determined that this new outrage should not go unpunished, and, for the purpose of mortifying their pride, Parliament passed a law ordering the port of Boston to be closed, the Custom House to be removed to Salem and that the law should remain in force, until recompense should be made for the tea, which had been destroyed.

Upon receiving the news of this bill, the inhabitants, instead of being any more disposed to yield the contest of their rights, became more firmly resolved than ever, to maintain their principles, though by so doing they should sacrifice their dearest enjoyments. They therefore declared this act of Parliament to be in the highest degree oppressive and invited all of the colonies, to unite with them in a general non-importation league.

So universally were the sympathies of the American people moved with the suffering of the citizens of Boston, that they cheerfully united with them in the league, and of their own accord, sent supplies to relieve them of their distress and, upon the day on which the law was to take effect, observed a season of fasting and prayer, imploring the divine aid at this trying crisis. The orators of the day presented, in a glaring light, the unjust acts of the British Parliament and inflamed the minds of their fellow-citizens, with a determination to resist the oppression.

In the midst of the distress, which was every where occasioned by the cessation of commerce, it was proposed by Virginia to hold a general Congress of delegates from each of the colonies, to deliberate

upon the course, that it would be proper for them to take, in view of the evils which threatened their common country.

This Congress met at Philadelphia, on the 5th of September, 1774. Peyton Randolph, of Virginia, was chosen President, and when the assembly was organized for business, a stillness pervaded the house, which threw over it the solemnity of death. The most distinguished men of the nation had been brought together to consult for the liberties of no less than three millions of people. It was a period of awful moment. Who should break upon that silence that was expressing more than it was in the power of words to utter? In the midst of the deep feeling occasioned by this pause, Patrick Henry, the orator of the revolution, "arose, slowly, as if borne down by the weight of the subject. After faltering according to his habit, through the most impressive exordium, in which he merely echoed back the consciousness of every other heart, in deploring his ability to do justice to the occasion ; he launched gradually, into a recital of colonial wrongs. Rising as he advanced, with the grandeur of his subject and glowing, at length, with the majesty and expectation of the occasion, his speech seemed more than that of mortal man.—There was no rant—no rhapsody—no labor of the understanding—no straining of the voice—no confusion of utterance. His countenance was erect—his eye steady—his action noble—his enunciation clear and firm—his mind poised on its centre—his views of his subject comprehensive and great—and his imagin-

ation corruscating with a magnificence and variety, which struck even that assembly with amazement and awe. He sat down amidst murmurs of astonishment and applause." Such is the admirable portrait drawn by the pen of Wm. Wirt, of this wonderful man, as he stood upon the floor of this Congress of the colonies ; and the few glittering fragments of his eloquence, upon colonial rights and British oppression, which have been left us, are sufficient to afford a convincing proof, that he was a powerful agent in bringing the minds of the Americans to brave the struggles of the Revolution.

The proceedings, of this convention, were characterized by an ability and firmness, which not only inspired the minds of the colonists with zeal and confidence, but drew from the most distinguished personages of Europe, sentiments of respect for the genius and talent of America.

At the next Parliament of Great Britain conciliating measures, in reference to the colonies were introduced but were as soon rejected, so that nothing appeared to be left for the Americans but resistance—every means had been tried, which an injured people could use without resorting to arms, and this was the only remedy that seemed to be left for them.

They therefore, began to collect the implements of war, to organize a regular militia and to prepare stores. The voice of Patrick Henry is heard to echo from the halls of debate, and to reverberate through every town and hamlet—" *There is no longer any room for hope. If we mean to be free—if we mean*



to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending—if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle, in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon, until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained—we must *fight!* I repeat it, Sir, we *must* fight!!”

The thrill, which words like these sent through the bosom of a House of Representatives, could not be confined within the walls in which they were uttered—they broke away from the narrow confines of a single hall and scattered their spirit, with the rapidity of lightning from heart to heart, until every ear seems to catch a distant echo of the words, “I repeat it, sir, *we must fight.*”

The minds of the people were awakened to the conviction that a contest, for their rights, could not be avoided with honor, and they began to prepare themselves for the conflict. The smooth and beautiful green, soon becomes the scene of a mock fight and the peaceful and quiet grove, begins to ring with the elements of war. The distant hills echo to the sound of the rifle, or witness the skillful and wary ambuscade. Thus hill and dale, and grove and woods, are alive with the notes of preparation and seem to beat in unison with the pulsations of a whole people panting for liberty.

It was at this stage of the dispute between America and Great Britain, that young Van Campen became fired with the spirit, which was carried, even into the remote settlements, of resisting, to the latest

breath, the oppressive measures of England. He had watched the progress of this discussion, he had beheld with an indignant feeling the oppressive designs of the British Parliament and was ready, whenever the opportunity should be presented, to throw his feeble might into the scale of resistance.

Residing with his father, upon an elegant farm on the waters of Fishing Creek, twenty-eight miles above Northumberland, he was removed at a distance from what was then the heart of the war, yet he was not entirely separated from what would in all probability, become a scene of danger. Should the Indian take sides with the English, he would be in a part of the country open to the incursions of this terrible foe, and could not, therefore, expect to remain, a disinterested spectator of the conflict.

It being yet uncertain which side the Indians would take, the colonists were interested in making them their allies or in, at least, securing their neutrality.—But the friends of the Crown, being conscious, that their force would not be inconsiderable, were no less desirous of obtaining their aid to crush the cause of the *Rebels*, as it was termed, in this country. Reports injurious to the colonies, were therefore circulated with great industry among them; and every possible means taken to turn their decision in favor of the Royalists.

To this side they naturally inclined. They are a people, over whom, imagination has a wonderful power;—they possess a high veneration for anciently established rites, and preserve, with a

sacred regard, the traditions of their forefathers.— They feel themselves bound, too, by the most solemn obligations to obey their treaties and, when these have been handed down, from generation to generation, they gain an influence over them, which holds them almost entirely under its sway.

The Indians had, for more than a century, been in alliance with the British government. They had received, from it, protection, when attacked by their enemies, who were connected with the French, they had been supplied by its bounty, and been taught to respect their “Great Father across the waters.”— They possessed the most exalted ideas of its power and wealth ; and supposed as a matter of course, that the colonists would be the sufferers, in this “quarrel” with their mother-land.

It was not unnatural, therefore, that they should cling to that side, which they regarded as possessing an established authority and, by its superior might, capable of enforcing obedience upon all of its subjects. They espoused the cause of the British and held a prominent place in the war of the Revolution.

As the notes of preparation, for the anticipated struggle, continued to fall more distinctly upon the ear, the lines of difference became more and more apparent and it was soon very easy to distinguish between friends and foes. The news of the seizure of the stores at Concord, by the British, and of the battle at Lexington, spread with the velocity of the wind, throughout all of the colonies and was enough to kindle into a blaze, the hidden fire that had already

begun to agitate their bosoms. Public speakers went into every settlement to stimulate the minds of the citizens, with the ideas of war, and they set forth, in such glaring colors, the injured rights of the Americans, that every heart seemed to echo back the words that were floating through the land, from the lips of Henry—"give me *liberty*, or give me *death*."

In order more effectually to prepare themselves for the crisis that was approaching, the young men of Van Campen's age, who lived along the north branch of the Susquehanna, chose him for their captain and met once a week, to practice on the rifle and engage in exercises suited to the field of battle. They were already quite expert in the use of the gun, having been accustomed to the pursuit of game, which was found in great abundance, on the borders of the streams which intersected the country. Almost every young man, in that region, was furnished with a rifle and had practiced it, in chasing the deer, as he bounded freely and fearlessly over his native hills, or in watching for the elk, as he came to refresh himself with a cool and chrystal draught at the head-springs of rivers. Thus, in the pursuit of pleasure, without a thought of the events that were to chequer their history, they had in a measure, prepared themselves for the struggles which they were called to encounter. But this skill they deemed insufficient for them in the event of war, and applied themselves, with becoming diligence to the use of arms.

In the course of their preparation they anticipated an encounter with two kinds of enemies ;—they were

to be trained on the one hand, for the regular manœuverings of a well disciplined army ; for such a foe they might expect to meet, in the troops of Great Britain, on the other, they were to be skilled in a warfare in which the tactics, belonging to the open field were to be thrown aside as entirely useless, for, living among the frontier settlements, which stretched from Georgia to the lakes, they were open to the cruel and relentless savage, who would come, not with the steady approaches of a well appointed force, but with the collected might of a torrent, which suddenly bursts upon the unsuspecting inhabitant and carries him away, leaving only a track of desolation behind.

Whenever they met to practice, their training was directed to both methods of warfare. Besides going through with the regular exercises of the militia service, they accustomed themselves to those manœuvers which they knew were suited to Indian artifice. They met on his chosen ground, in the thicket and in the wood ; they threw the tomahawk and drew the knife. They would conceal themselves with all the adroitness of the savage warrior, practice a sort of skulking fire upon their enemy and having killed him, go through the ceremony of relieving him of his scalp.

Let us draw a little from Mr. Van Campen's memory upon this. He says—"we used, sometimes, in these exercises to mark out with chalk the figure of an Indian warrior on a board, so as to represent him as large as life, and would then place the board



behind a rising piece of ground, where, by going from it a little distance it would be out of sight. We would then select some part of the Indian's body, at which to shoot, and then having retreated some distance, we would creep up, with trailed arms, until we came in sight of the figure, then rise, fire and retreat. After which, we always went to examine what kind of shots we had made. If we had selected an arm to shoot at, we would count the number of bullet holes that were made in the arm. We could always tell each other's shots by the size of the bullet hole, for the bores of our rifles were all of a different diameter. We would then take some other part of the figure and go around and come up to it again and rise, fire and retreat as we had done before and then return to see who had made the best shot. We would keep doing in this way until the unfortunate warrior, who had been made the victim of our sport, would be shot almost all to pieces. We also used to throw the tomahawk at the figure of an Indian marked out on a tree, and would take him in the forehead—between the eyes, or in any other part we chose and hardly ever missed our aim; we were almost always successful with the hatchet and with the gun."

In exercises like these Mr. Van Campen and the young men of his age spent the days of their youth, anxiously looking forward to the time when, they might espouse the cause of their country, and avenge the blood, that had already been shed in the defense of her dearest rights.

Little did the British imagine that, while they were

sending their troops across the Atlantic to awe into submission a few "*rebellious subjects*," the boys of America, were trimming the woods with their hatchets, and driving the nail with their bullets, that they might be able to cope with the Indian, or be prepared to take the button of a "*red coat*" as far as the eye could see him, whenever he should attempt to place his unhallowed foot upon the soil of freedom. A nation formed of such spirits, possesses a sure safeguard against the dominion of any foreign power. It may be invaded, its territory overrun by the armies of another realm, and its brave inhabitants be obliged to flee from one point of security to another;—to seek refuge in the fastnesses of their mountains, or bury themselves in the depths of their native forests, but be subdued, it never will.

In the year 1776, a regiment was raised in Northumberland county, commanded by Col. Cook, for the purpose of joining the continental army under Washington, which was then stationed in the vicinity of Boston. Young Van Campen at this time eagerly enrolled his name in the service of his country, was presented with the office of Ensign in one of the companies of the regiment, and prepared himself to march to any point where he might be wanted.\*

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\*Nearly all of those who were his companions in practicing on the rifle, sooner or later joined the army and the greater part of them afterwards fell in the severe struggles for liberty. Some of them were of the party under Boyd, who were cut down by the Indians, near Conesus, in Livingston county, New York, during the campaign of Sullivan, in '79.

But the Committee of Safety for the county, through the influence of Mr. James McClure, one of their number and a man of high respectability, dissuaded him from leaving the frontier. He said to him, "that he was wanted where he was, and could make himself useful in such a situation if any where—that it was the residence of his friends—where his lot was cast and it appeared natural and proper for him to stay and defend those who were endeared to him by the attachments and intimacies of home."

He knew that Van Campen had made himself familiar with the Indian modes of warfare and that he wanted neither the disposition or skill, to meet them in their own place and fight them according to their own fashion; and since they might be expected among them, with all their savage ferocity, it became important that some one should remain to defend the firesides of the inhabitants scattered along the frontier settlements. Mr. McClure, therefore used all his influence with him, to persuade him to remain where he was, and listening to his kind persuasions and sound reasoning, he resigned his commission and resolved to remain at home. This is one of the main hinges upon which his subsequent history turns; it probably gave a different direction to his whole future course.

## CHAPTER III.

*Mr. Van Campen's services during the year 1777—  
Anecdote of Gen. Marion—Scouting party—Wrestling match.*

ALTHOUGH Mr. Van Campen had been active in making preparation for the anticipated struggle, it was not until the year '77 that he fairly entered upon the life of a soldier. By this time the war of the revolution had been fairly commenced, several important battles had been fought and Independence having been declared, there appeared to be no hope of ending the contest but by the complete victory of one party or the other. The Indians too, who had heretofore been persuaded to remain neutral, were by the appeals made to their cupidity, induced to take sides in the struggles between the two contending parties. They were told by British Commissioners, who met them in a council of the Six Nations, which was called at Oswego, for the purpose of engaging their service in subduing the Rebels, "that the people of the States were few in number, and easily subdued—that on account of their disobedience to the King, they justly merited all the punishment it was possible for white men and Indians to inflict upon them, at the same time stating, that the King was rich and powerful both in money and subjects—that his rum was as plenty as the water in Lake Ontario, his men as numerous

as the sands upon its shore—and that the Indians, if they would assist in the war, and persevere in their friendship to the King, till it was closed, should never want for money or goods.”\*

In accordance with this offer the Chiefs entered into an agreement with the Commissioners, by which they pledged themselves to take up arms against the rebels, and continue in his Majesty’s service, until they were subdued. As soon as the treaty was finished, the Commissioners made a present to each Indian of a suit of clothes, a brass kettle, a gun and tomahawk, a scalping knife, a quantity of powder and lead, a piece of gold, and promised a bounty on every scalp that should be brought in.†

Indian hostilities were therefore anticipated by those living among the settlements bordering the Susquehanna. Indeed the news began already to reach them of one and another falling at their lonely habitation in the remote parts of the forest, by the hand of this cruel foe.

This part of the frontier had hitherto been protected by volunteer scouts, which ranged up and down along the outer settlements, yet notwithstanding the vigilance of these, the wily Indian found the occasion to rush from his hiding place, and visit with a sudden and terrible death, many of the inhabitants scattered along the north and west branches of the Susquehanna. It was found, therefore, that some means were necessary more effectually to secure it against

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\*Mrs. Jemison’s Narrative.

†Ib.



Indian depredations, and establish a regular defense, which would give to it a greater prospect of security, than it could enjoy with only a temporary force established at intervals, and then, in such scanty numbers, as to offer but a feeble resistance to an invading foe. In order to supply them with this force the militia was brought into the field, and in this Mr. Van Campen served in the capacity of orderly sergeant in a regiment commanded by Col. John Kelly, and in the company of Capt. Thomas Gaskins.

The regiment was ordered to go up the river, and station itself at Reid's Fort, which was built opposite to what was called Big Island, in the Susquehanna river. From this point scouting parties were sent in every direction where the foe might be expected to approach and a constant vigilance maintained to prevent any sudden attack upon the inhabitants of the territory within the reach of their protection. The services of the year were mostly of the same character; the greatest inconvenience which they suffered here was from an occasional failure in obtaining a supply of provisions, and Mr. Van Campen when speaking of the events of this period, uniformly relates an anecdote of Gen. Marion. By association, the story has become so emphatically his own, that we will venture to introduce it, though it may have been heard before.

He says—"While we were stationed at Big Island, there was a time when we were obliged to adopt the fare of Gen. Marion, when he was visited by a British officer. The story is not a long, but a very good

one, and will serve to illustrate the condition of many of our countrymen during the war of the revolution. A British officer once sought the camp of Gen. Marion, to treat with him in reference to an exchange of prisoners. The fame of this brave man had led him to anticipate the sight of a hero, whose person would present him with the romantic picture of a William Wallace, surrounded by a glittering suit of trained warriors. But what was his astonishment, when introduced into the presence of Gen. Marion, to see before him a man very diminutive in size, clad in a coarse home-spun coat and *that* wearing every appearance of hard service, standing in the midst of a company of ragged soldiers, whose rustic manner and haggard looks presented any thing but the appearance which the accomplished Briton had been led to anticipate.

He paused for a moment to take another survey.— Could this be the man, whose very name spread terror among the British ranks—these the soldiers which were accustomed to scatter the royal troops like straws driven before a mighty tempest? Yet he saw a fire in the eye, and a decision of character, drawn upon the very features of the man before him, which assured him that he was indeed in the presence of no ordinary personage.

After finishing his business to his satisfaction, he arose to depart. Marion detained him ;—‘it’s the hour of dinner, stay and dine with us.’

The officer saw around him little encouragement for a repast yet he acquiesced, and Marion addressing

one of the soldiers, said, 'come Tom, give us our dinner.' His dinner happened to be a goodly heap of potatoes that were quietly roasting under the embers. These Tom rolled out one after another with a large poking stick, blowing and brushing off the ashes with his shirt sleeve, which by the way, did not seem to have lately come from the hands of a laundress, and placing several of them on a piece of bark, set them on a large stump which served instead of a table.

'I fear' said the General, 'that our dinner will not prove as palatable to you as I could wish, but it is the best we have.'

The officer, who was a gentleman, replied that 'roasted potatoes were a very great rarity to him and that he could not be furnished with a more desirable meal.' He took one, and affected to eat as though it were a very great dainty, yet it was quite apparent that he was performing his part, more from politeness than a desire to satisfy the cravings of hunger.

After eating for some time in silence, he presently broke into a laugh and excusing himself said, that he 'was thinking of the appearance of a company of British officers around such a frugal board as this.'

'I suppose,' said the General, 'that your style of living is very different from that which you see here.'

'Oh, yes,' said the officer, 'and I suppose that commonly, you live much better too;—this must be one of your *lent* dinners.'

'No,' replied the General, 'our living is rather

worse, if any thing, for we often don't get enough of this.'

'Good heavens!' replied the officer, 'but perhaps what you lack in *meal* you make up in *malt* you doubtless get good pay.'

'Not a *cent*, sir,—not *one cent*.'

'Heavens and earth!!' exclaimed the officer, 'you must have a hard time of it,—*all fighting—no pay, and no provisions but potatoes.*'

'Why,' said the General, 'this all depends upon feeling; the service is easy if you are only in love with it. Jacob was willing to toil fourteen years for his beautiful Rachel, because he loved her. *Liberty* is the fair damsel of my choice, and for her I would willingly serve in a campaign of twice seven years. I look upon these venerable trees and they speak to me of Liberty; they tell me I am treading upon my native soil—a soil that ought to be free; and so long as I am engaged in the defense of right, I can look upon these noble monuments of nature around me, and feel that I do not dishonor them. Ah, sir, I would rather feed on roots and herbs, and serve for nothing, than basely abandon the cause of my country.'

The British officer, it is said, was so struck with these sentiments and the manner in which they were uttered, that he resolved never again to fight the Americans, and returning to his army, he resigned his commission and retired to a private life in his own country; thus paying a most honorable tribute to the virtue of the American cause.

When our provisions failed us, we were obliged to

resort to the use of potatoes which we found in the neighboring fields. Many of the inhabitants through fear of the Indians had fled from their farms, taking with them whatever they considered to be of most value, but leaving great quantities of potatoes buried in the ground. These proved to be of very great service to us, for we were many times so destitute of provisions, that had we not been able to resort to these, we should have been in a state of absolute suffering. We used to go after them with a small force, a part of our number acting as a guard for those, who were occupied with the hoe or spade with which they were dug. But in addition to this simple fare we were sometimes favored with a few rounds of fresh pork. Many of the farmers' hogs ran wild in the woods, living upon acorns and roots and from these we often supplied ourselves with a goodly quantity of fresh meat."

About the only circumstance that occurred while he was stationed here, that seemed to present Mr. Van Campen with any opening for an adventure, was in receiving the news that a party of Indians had pitched their camp at a place about thirty miles above them, on the river, at a place called Young Woman's Town, from the daughter of a chief who had once presided over the remnant of a tribe, which had occupied that territory.

He says in reference to this, that "a company of men was selected, myself among the number, to go up and rout them from this place. After making every arrangement that was deemed necessary we



started with a light and joyous heart to execute our commission. We occupied a part of two days in our march to the place where we expected to find them, keeping runners ahead to act as spies and report to the main body any intelligence which they might receive concerning the enemy. We marched with great caution and kept ourselves ready for an attack at any moment, for we did not know when we might meet with our foes ; but though we spent several days in the search, we could hear or see no traces of the enemy which had been reported. We returned by different routes to the camp, but met with no adventure worthy of note."

This is a good description of the nature of the service performed by the regiment of Col. Kelly, while stationed at Reid's Fort. Scouting parties were kept out continually, which ranged the country in every direction that they might anticipate the approach of the Indian ; yet fortunately for them perhaps, and the inhabitants of the country, he committed few depredations, during the time of which we are speaking, upon this part of the frontier settlements.

He had probably been detained by the warlike enterprizes that the British were projecting at the north ; for there were a large body of Indians in the army of Burgoyne, which, having obtained possession of Lake Champlain, Crown Point and Ticonderoga, was pressing toward Albany in pursuance with their design of forming a junction with another part of the army, then at New York, which was at the same time to move north until the two should come

together, and thus open a communication between New York and Canada. Neither would it have been probable that any very signal attack could have been made upon this part of the frontier, since Brant the distinguished leader of the Indians in almost all of their engagements of any note during the war, was also concerned in the operations of the north, having agreed with his warriors, to meet Col. St. Leger, at Oswego,\* who, at the same time that Burgoyne was making his descent upon Northern New York, was dispatched from Montreal by the way of the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario to that place, intending after his junction there, with the Indians under Brant and the loyalists under Johnson, to march by the valley of the Mohawk towards Albany, and there join the army under the command of General Burgoyne.

In these military enterprizes the Indian found enough to gratify his warlike spirit, without making a descent upon the frontiers of Pennsylvania. For, so long as the lover of brave deeds shall remember the gallant defense of the Hero of Oriskany, he may at the same time recollect the feelings of the dusky warrior, at seeing, in that action, so many of his noble comrades fall around him. The Indians sustained a severe loss in this campaign, so much so that their towns "exhibited a scene of real sorrow and distress, when their warriors returned and recounted their misfortunes, and stated the real loss they had sustained. The mourning was excessive, and was expressed

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\*Stone's life of Brant.

by the most doleful yells, shrieks, and howlings, and by inimitable gesticulations.”\*

But notwithstanding these engagements the Indian found sufficient opportunities for hovering around the outskirts of the settlements, and by their stealthy movements, kept up a continual apprehension in the mind so that no one could feel secure from their sudden and terrible irruptions.

While Mr. Van Campen was at Ried's Fort there occurred an incident in his history, which will serve to give the reader some idea of his physical strength as well as show something of the customs which prevailed when he was a young man. He was now twenty years of age ; and his constitution, naturally firm, had never been impaired, either by accident or ill health. “Nurtured” as he is wont to say, “in the school of the rifle and the tomahawk,” he had brought the power of endurance and of a strong muscle upon his frame. He was about five feet and ten inches in height, well proportioned, and by the exercises with which he had perfected every energy of his body, he now stood in the pride and vigor of his youth. He relates the incident as follows :

“There was a tract of land on the west side of the river, nearly opposite to where we lay, which was settled by what were called squatters, men of great muscular strength and activity. As they derived their title to the land from the Indians they were named the Indian-land-men. We, who were called the

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\*Mrs. Jemison's Narrative.

Northumbrians, received a challenge from them to a wrestling match. Wrestling was a very common exercise at the time, and as there had been some little dispute between the two, in reference to their comparative strength, the Indian-land-men, who had a sufficiently high opinion of their own powers, gave the challenge to the Northumbrians to bring their best man on to the ground to match their selected champion, and they would have an opportunity to decide which party had the best right to boast of its strength. The mode of wrestling then practiced was to stand breast to breast and each to place his hands on the other's hips, clench his trowsers near the waistband and at the word "ready," to put forth all their strength, the one to lift the other off his feet and throw him from his balance if possible, and he who was the quickest and smartest, was the best fellow. Capt. Gaskins could not brook the banter from the other party and thinking that he could find a man equal to the occasion among his own men, accepted the challenge. I was selected from among our own men to be the champion; the time and the place were appointed, the Indian-land-men attending on the one side, and the Northumbrians on the other. The whole party formed a ring broad enough to see the sport, and then the antagonists stepped out into the centre. Gentlemanly arrangements were made so that no unfair advantage might be taken, but that each of the combatants might have an equal chance. Both were to stand perfectly still till the question was put "are you ready?". As soon as this was put and answered

it was considered perfectly fair to take all the advantage you possibly could.

My antagonist was a stout muscular man, McCormick by name, older than myself, accustomed to such exercises and confident, I presume, that he would be able to lay me upon my back. The men on his side were all raised to an intensity of feeling that made them observe, with anxious look, each movement that was made, feeling that their honor was concerned in gaining the victory, after having given the challenge.

As to myself, though young, I was full grown, round built, full chested, large limbed, and to the eye of an observer perhaps, apparently clumsy and slow motioned, yet in reality I could lay out all my strength in an instant, or throw it into a single twitch. I knew that my captain, and all of our company were looking on with interest, and would feel unpleasantly to have their man defeated. I determined therefore, to do my best, and if possible give the first spring.

With this intention I was careful, after we had taken our position to put the question myself—"Are you ready?" "Yes," said he—as quick as a flash, I twitched with all my might, raised him from the ground, took a lock upon him and threw him in the twinkling of an eye upon his head and shoulders. He rose in a second unhurt, and said, "Sir, you can't do that again." I answered promptly—"We'll try it sir."

We took another hold and he was then rather too



quick for me. He attempted to take what at the time was called the crotch lock, I was well acquainted with his design and partly evaded his hold ; he managed however to raise me up from the ground on his breast, carry me to the ring and made a great effort to fling me upon my back but failed in it, for while he was laboring to throw me into a horizontal position and lay me prostrate, I slipped his lock and made out in the struggle to obtain a firm foothold upon the ground and as soon as I felt it, I gave him the hoist in my turn, took the hip lock upon him, that is, threw my hip under him, bent forward with my hand clenched in his trowsers, near the waistband, raised him and swung him through the air with his feet extended and hit a tall militia man, six feet high, knocked him down and several others at his side and left my man in their midst, all kicking and tumbling in a heap.

This raised a shout of laughter on both sides and having thrown him twice out of three times I was crowned conqueror by the laws of the game, and our men were highly gratified to see that their champion had won the day. But as every thing had been conducted fairly, no ill-blood was excited, and no unpleasant circumstances followed."

The general events of the war which transpired during the year '77, were such as to re-animate the hearts of the American people. By a series of adverse circumstances at the north, such as the loss of Crown Point and Ticonderoga, a temporary gloom was spread over the minds of many who were mark-

ing with intense interest every event, which seemed favorable or adverse to the final triumph of the united colonies.

But the little skirmish which the brave Washington had with the British at Trenton, and his victory immediately after at Princeton, served to turn the scale and raise the hopes of the desponding, so that with the victories which were obtained afterwards, in the defeat of Col. St. Leger and the capture of Gen. Burgoyne and his army at the north, confidence was again restored, the star of liberty began to take the ascendant and a thousand bosoms were filled with joy at seeing the constellation of their choice steadily and successfully advance towards the meridian of its splendor.

Many had begun to entertain doubts concerning the issue of the contest with Great Britain. Some were apprehensive that the colonies would ere long be obliged to return to their allegiance, since they anticipated a complete triumph of the invading army, others had already made peace with and sought protection from the officers of the crown, while others still, were wavering in uncertainty or waiting for a favorable opportunity to declare themselves on the side of the royalists. Indeed before the victory of Princeton, New Jersey had been supposed to have been nearly won over to the government of Britain, but the reviving hopes of those who had fainted almost, at the disasters previous, now assured his Majesty's friends that there was a large populace left, over which they could command no sway. Yet the

victories of this year were not only advantageous in recovering the spirit and in strengthening the purposes of the American people to remain true to their undertaking, but they were also important in deciding the policy of other nations who were looking on, uncertain as yet whether or no to declare themselves friendly to the cause of liberty in this country. France, which had hitherto shown a doubtful intention, now declared herself openly in favor of the colonies, entered into terms of alliance and pledged her aid in bringing the conflict to a favorable issue, so that by the successes of this year the Americans entered with a firmer zeal upon the struggles of the next.

## CHAPTER IV.

*His services in the year 1778—Builds a Fort on Fishing Creek—Attacked by the Indians—Gallant defense—Another attack. Adventure with a company of Tories—Destruction of a company of militia by the Indians.*

EARLY in the year 1778, Mr. Van Campen was appointed lieutenant of a company of six-months men, which was raised by the authority of the State, for the protection of the frontiers. They were under the superintendence of Col. Samuel Hunter, who then acted as military head of the county of Northumberland, a man well fitted for the post he held, being a real patriot, possessed of a sound judgement and thoroughly acquainted with the wants of the country, as well as prompt to meet and supply them.

The service of a lieutenant upon the frontiers was well suited to the tastes and habits of young Van Campen. He was perfectly acquainted with the ground upon which he was to act, having traversed it hundreds of times in the pursuit of game. He was familiar with every nook and corner of the forest, which stretched numbers of miles to the north and south of his father's farm, so that within this range, there was no hiding place where the Indian could secrete himself and come out upon him unawares.

His command consisted of about twenty young men who were, as well as himself, familiar with the country,

expert in the use of the rifle and acquainted with the Indian modes of warfare. With these he was ordered early in the month of April, to proceed up the north branch of the Susquehanna, to the mouth of Fishing Creek and, following up this three miles to a compact settlement located in that region, build a fort for the reception of the inhabitants in case of an attack from the Indians. These were already abroad upon the outer line of the settlements, and were active in committing their depredations and sending in, every day almost, terrified messengers bearing the sad news of houses burned, unfortunate victims scalped and of families carried into captivity.

It was no time then, for him to be idle ; a few days, it might be a few hours, and the savages might be among the people whom he was sent to protect, and repeat the same scenes of cruelty and of blood.

He exerted himself therefore, to his utmost, with his men to be prepared for an immediate state of defense and entered with all possible diligence upon the labor of building a fort. He selected for a site, the farm of a Mr. Wheeler, whence it was afterwards called Wheeler's Fort. It was built with stockades and was sufficiently large to accommodate all the families of the settlement. Anticipating at every moment, the approach of their foe they applied their utmost energy to complete their works sufficiently to afford some protection to the inhabitants in case of an attack.

The Indians in approaching the border settlements usually struck upon the head waters of some of the



streams that were bordered by inhabitants, and marched down the valleys, through which they were flowing, or through the defiles that were made for them in the mountains, until they came within a short distance of the white man's habitation, where they would separate into various companies and from different points fall upon the quiet and unsuspecting victims of their fury.

They could not come, however, at this period, without being anticipated. Spies were out in every direction to give warning of the first approach of danger. Before the fort was entirely completed, one of their runners came flying, with the speed of the wind to announce the approach of a large party of savages.

The inhabitants gathered into the Fort with quick and hasty rush, leaving their cheerful homes to the undisputed sway of their foes. Meanwhile the Indians were prowling around under the secret covert of the woods and all at once burst out with wild and savage yell upon the peaceful farm-houses of the settlement. Fortunately these were all upon which they could vent their rage. From the elevated position of the Fort, the inhabitants could see their dwellings entered, feather beds and blankets carried out and scattered around with frantic cries, and very soon after could behold the flame and smoke leap to the tops of their dwellings and ere long behold them sink to a quiet heap of embers.

But these sights were not mingled with the dying groans and death-shrieks of their wives and children,

and they could witness them with the calm and heart felt joy that their families were removed from the scene of danger.

The Indians spent the most of the day in pillaging and burning houses ; some of them made an attack upon the Fort, but to little purpose. Van Campen was active with his men in preparing for a vigorous defense in case they should attempt to storm their unfinished works. So prompt and successful were they that they were enabled to surround the Fort, at the distance of four rods, with a sort of barricade, which they contrived to make with brush and stakes, whose ends were sharpened and locked into each other so that it was very difficult to remove them and almost impossible for one to get through.

The Indians seeing this obstruction were contented to fire at them from a distance and keep themselves concealed behind the bushes. Their shots were as promptly returned, and thus a brisk firing was kept up until evening.

It was expected that the attack would be renewed the next morning but the ammunition of the Fort was nearly expended, and to be prepared for every emergency Van Campen dispatched a couple of his brave and trusty men to Fort Jenkins, about eight miles distant on the Susquehanna, whence they returned before the dawn of day with an ample supply of powder and lead. The remaining hours of darkness were spent in running bullets, and in making every preparation, which the circumstances admitted for the anticipated battle of the approaching day. This

they were disposed to think would be a warm one from what they knew of the superior force of the enemy and from the activity which they had already evinced.

The day dawned upon them but no enemy appeared. They might come upon them, however, at an unexpected moment, and it was no time to be careless. Yet they needed rest and found an opportunity to obtain it by watching in turn, some acting as sentries while others slept and these again serving as a guard, after a season of repose. Strict watch was kept in the direction whence they would be likely to approach, yet they did not come, and there was time for rest, which was quite grateful especially to the women and children after the alarms and fatigues of the preceding day and night.

This attack upon the settlement and fort was in the month of May 1778; had it been but a few days earlier, might have proved exceedingly disastrous, but so well were they provided with the means of defense that not a single life was lost or a person wounded. The Indians, not liking the preparations that had been made to receive them, retired leaving blood upon the ground, but nothing else by which to discover their loss.

But the Indians, not satisfied with this visit, made another attempt to surprise this fort in the month of June. The inhabitants who had taken refuge there in the spring still made it the home of their wives and children. They continued to cultivate their farms which were near, and returned to the fort at

night; and that their cattle might be more under the protection of the fort, they were driven every night into an enclosure which had been fenced off at the head of a small flat near by, for their reception.

“On one evening in the month of June,” says Mr. Van Campen, “just at the time when the women and girls were milking their cows, a sentinel called my attention to a movement in some bushes not far off which I soon discovered to be a party of Indians making their way to the cattle yard. There was no time to be lost: I immediately selected ten of my sharp shooters and under cover of a rise of ground crept between them and the milkers. On ascending the ridge we found ourselves within pistol shot of our lurking foes. I fired first and killed the leader. This produced an instant panic among the party, and they all flew away like a flock of birds. A volley from my men did no further execution; it only made the woods echo with the tremendous rear of their rifles. It sounded such an unexpected alarm in the ears of the honest dairy women that they were still more terribly frightened than the Indians. They started up upon their feet, screamed aloud, and ran with all their might, fearful lest the enemy should be upon them. In the mean time the milk pails flew in every direction, and the milk was scattered to the winds.—The best runner got in first. The poor cattle equally frightened, leapt the fence and ran off into the woods in every direction with their tails up, and bellowing at a most terrible rate. It was a scene of confusion as wild, and to us who knew there was no

danger, as laughable as can well be imagined.

But though it was an amusing scene to us, to the timid women and girls it was a serious fright, for when we returned, we found them trembling with agitation, and their faces pale from fear. Yet they soon recovered their accustomed feelings, and as soon as they learned that there was no danger ; were ready to laugh with us at the display which they had made of their bravery."

"As the season advanced," he continues, "Indian hostilities increased, and notwithstanding the vigilance of our scouts, which were constantly out, houses were burned and families murdered. We had sly and cruel enemies too, among the Tories, who were as ready to watch their opportunity to plunder and burn as the savages themselves, and often came with them painted and dressed in the same fashion. Three of these, whose families lived upon the frontier and who had been with the British, were accidentally discovered by a hunter in one of his excursions after game, who passed by the place where they lodged. It was in a log-shanty that had been deserted by its original proprietor, who had made it a temporary residence and then left it in pursuit of some more eligible situation. Surrounded on every side by a wild uncultivated forest, it was well fitted to become the retreat of darkly designing men.

Col. Hunter ordered me to take a small scout, of as many men as I wanted, and go to their hiding place, overcome them and bring them in as prisoners. I took with me five men and started soon after at eve-



ning, with the intention of surprising them the next morning before they were up. We traveled nearly all night; and just at the dawn of day drew near the house, but before we could enter it, were unfortunately discovered by one of the party, who happened to be on the outside of the house near the door and saw us. He immediately stepped back into the dwelling, closed the door and made it fast without loss of time. We, on our part, were equally prompt, pressed up close to the door, and called upon them in a peremptory tone to surrender. This, they at once refused, and declared they would defend themselves to the last moment and would blow out the brains of the first man who should attempt to cross the threshold. I was not to be intimidated by threats. I felt that I had a duty to do and I was determined to risk my life in its discharge. I thought, too, of the mischief which would be done by these fellows, and the valuable lives which they might destroy if they were permitted to run at large. I did not look much at danger, nor fear defeat, nor expect to die. No: I expected to force my way in among them at the head of my men, and with their help take them prisoners, and teach them how to march in good company and by daylight towards places, whither they had been wont to resort under the cover of darkness. A single glance of my eye together with what had fallen upon my ear were sufficient to assure me that I had no alternative but to force a passage. I ordered my men, all of them strong, resolute fellows, to take a heavy oak rail, that was lying near by, and drive the end of it

against the door until they broke it open ; then said I, 'my brave boys, as soon as there is a hole large enough to admit my body, I will enter. Now make it go, my lads.' They did so ; and soon jammed the door to pieces. The next moment I dashed in among them. They stood with their rifles loaded and cocked, prepared to fire and blow out the brains of the first rash intruder upon their floor, which in this case was myself. The first thing that met me was the muzzle of one of their guns, pointing directly into my face. I struck it aside, it went off, the ball passing close to my ear, while the powder, exploding in my face made it black and bloody upon one side, burned off the hair about my right ear and temple, and peppered my face to such a degree that many of the grains may be found upon it yet. I clenched the fellow and threw him in a moment, with an energy which I could not command at a common time. My men were close upon my heels, and seized the others and wrestled them down after a short, but firm resistance. We were two to their one, yet such was our fire and confidence, that, had we been equal in numbers, they could not have stood long before our fierce assault.

We bound their hands behind them and with our loaded rifles, drove them before us to the civil authority of the county for imprisonment.

Thus ended an adventure in which I came within an inch of death and escaped. From this period I can look back and see in it the hand of a wonderful Providence, but at the time, I passed it by with little or no thought other than a self congratulation for

having ended this little skirmish so fortunately."

This adventure, though it was of but little importance in comparison with the great events of the war, yet it is one which shows a more than ordinary degree of personal bravery. The same courage, which gives decision and energy to the field of battle, was necessary here, for the danger was as certain, and the chances of life perhaps as great as those which are found in a larger sphere of combat. He who would conduct himself resolutely under such circumstances, might be expected never to waver or seek to flee away, when brought upon the field of open strife.

At about the same time Col. Hunter received intelligence that a party of thirty-three militia, from Northampton county, were coming across the county, from the Delaware to the Susquehanna, to help them. The word was that they were about to start or were already upon their way. They were discovered as they afterwards learned, by a large party of Indians who followed their trail and watched them a whole day or perhaps longer. Their object obviously was, to find them off their guard and then fall upon them by surprise and kill them at once, or possibly, make a portion of them prisoners. The inexperienced militiamen followed an old Indian path which led through a desolate wilderness, from the borders of one river to the vicinity of the other.

Their concealed and terrible enemies hovered about their track anxious to take advantage of the first unguarded moment. As the party drew near the end of their journey they imagined that they were safe,

and were elated with the hope of soon joining their brethren in arms, to assist them in making a vigorous defense of the invaded and distressed frontier to their west and north. It was only about seven miles to a place on the Susquehanna called the Nescopeck Falls. They had arrived already at what had recently been a Scotch settlement, which, on account of the border troubles, was now totally deserted.— They came into open and cleared fields that were covered with a luxuriant growth of grass, and beautiful with wild and fragrant flowers. They saw before them pastures rich with the green coloring of early summer, sprinkled here and there, with the snowy heads of the modest white clover.

This place was too inviting to allow them to pass without pausing to enjoy the luxury of the scene. It was especially tempting to men who had become weary with the fatigues and hardships of a lengthy march. They needed relaxation and refreshment since they had been for several days before, tearing their way through thickets of brush and briers, clambering over rocks and logs and opening as they did upon what appeared like an earthly paradise, it was not unnatural that they should cast aside every thought of danger and betake themselves to innocent amusements.

What enemy could invade so delightful a spot as this?—its very appearance one might suppose sufficient to lull to peace the rough elements of war.

They gave themselves up to indulgence in the most thoughtless and unguarded manner. One went one

way, and another, another ; each following his own fancy without order, without a single sentinel, guns scattered here and there, some lying against stumps, others leaning upon fences or logs, some perhaps stacked, and others again lying flat upon the ground. The position of the men were as various as those of their fire-arms. They were as inconsiderate and as much exposed as a parcel of boys playing ball upon some green, of a training day. Such were the circumstances in which these men were found by the Indians, who came upon them suddenly and cut them in pieces.

Their commanding officer committed a fault wholly inexcusable in a military man in marching through an enemy's country. Situated as they were, it was mere sport for their foes to shoot them down, or with a tomahawk level them with the ground. They were all cut down but three, who effected their escape and one who was taken as a prisoner to Fort Niagara, and delivered up to the British. His name was James Scobey, an ensign, whom Mr. Van Campen met with there in the year 1782, and from whom he received a history of the whole affair.

The three men who fled, scattered the news of their terrible disaster, far and wide through the country bordering upon the Delaware. It soon reached the Susquehanna, flew along its banks and filled the ears of the soldiers, and moved their hearts and stirred them up to avenge the death of their countrymen upon their unsparing destroyers. But these came and went like a mighty storm which sweeps through the valley, and rises upon the opposite hills,



leaving a track of desolation, and is seen no more.

Soon after this fatal and melancholy affair, Mr. Van Campen was directed by Col. Hunter to select a company of men and go and make what discoveries he was able and bury the dead. In obedience to these orders, he took with him a sufficient number of men and proceeded in the direction in which the event had occurred. "Never shall I forget," he has often been heard to remark, "the impression made upon my mind on coming in sight of the slain bodies of my countrymen. Several days had elapsed since the time when they met with their sudden and terrible death and being exposed to the voracious appetites of wolves and other beasts of prey which infested the neighborhood, as well as having suffered from the influence of a warm atmosphere, the sight which they presented to the eye was too revolting for description, it was a scene which could only be witnessed by those who are accustomed to the horrors of war.— After burying the men as decently as we could, we proceeded towards Wyoming and on our way met with the news of its dreadful massacre."

## CHAPTER V.

*Continuation of the year 1778—Battle of Wyoming—Story of Lebbeus Hammond. Mr. Van Campen heads a scouting party—Sport with the Lancaster men—Goes out as a Spy.*

INDIAN hostilities were very general during the year '78, all along the frontier settlements of New York and Pennsylvania. The inability of our government to furnish them with those supplies which they were accustomed to derive from the Europeans, was the probable cause of their not being detained at home.

By the readiness with which the British could convey to them from Montreal, every article which they regarded as an object of desire or of taste, they easily ingratiated themselves into favor and secured their hostility to the American cause.

It is true that some of the tribes preserved an unbroken attachment for the liberty of the colonies, yet most of them were induced to take up the hatchet on the other side, and the instances of their activity in plundering, burning and murdering, which have been given in the preceding chapter, serve but to show the disasters which they carried to every settlement within the wide range open to their invasion.

But the most important attack made upon that part of the frontier in which Mr. Van Campen was

stationed, was at Wyoming. The British officers in command at Niagara, determining to strike a severe blow upon the inhabitants of this region sent out a detachment of three hundred men under Col. John Butler, accompanied by five hundred Indians, which marched to the head waters of the Susquehanna, where having furnished themselves with canoes,\* they sailed down the river to a place called the Three Islands. From this point they marched about twenty miles across the wilderness, passed through a gap in the mountain and entered the valley near its northern boundary.†

They took possession of two small Forts, which it is said, being occupied principally by Tories, were surrendered without much opposition. In one of them called Fort Wintermoot, Col. John Butler established his head quarters; the other was burnt.‡

The inhabitants immediately upon hearing of the invasion assembled in one of their fortifications named

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\*It is generally maintained by the settlers of this region that the Indians in this expedition, fitted out their canoes and embarked upon the Canisteo between what is now called Arkport and Hornellsville, and very soon after the war Mr. Van Campen was shown the place where they cut their pine trees and hollowed them out and prepared them for the water. A few trees he saw partly formed into canoes which had perhaps been abandoned from some defect in the timber. It is said by Stone in his life of Brant that they embarked upon the river at Tioga Point; in either case it is a matter of little importance.

†Marshall's life of Washington.

‡In Col. Butler's letter to the board of war in which he sketches the whole account of this affair, it is said that both of the forts were burnt, and this perhaps is the better authority. In the text we have followed Chapman and Stone.

Fort Forty and Col. Zebulon Butler, who was in command of about sixty of the regular troops then stationed there, exerted himself to raise the militia of the settlements. But many of these were detained through their desire of defending the women and children, that were collected in the different fortifications along the river.

Yet a company of about three hundred was raised, commanded by Col. Dennison and with these Col. Butler proceeded on the first of July, to meet the enemy. They marched up the river towards them until they came across and killed two Indians, who the day before murdered nine men that were at work in a corn-field. Here they found that they had advanced a little beyond the main body of the enemy and as they were in want of provisions they thought it best to fall back to Fort Forty. \*As every man had to return to his own house for provision they were not in a condition to renew their march before the 3d, and having held a consultation upon what course they had better pursue ; whether it was best for them to proceed against the enemy with their present number, or fortify themselves at their position until a reinforcement should be received from Gen. Washington, to whom intelligence of the movements of the enemy had been sent and who had been desired to render immediate assistance, the officers were all agreed in the opinion that it was best to

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\*Col. Butler's Letter.

attack the enemy before he advanced towards them any further.\* In accordance with this opinion the garrison, amounting to nearly four hundred, left the the Fort and on the third of July, at the dawn of day commenced its march against their foes under the command of Col. Zebulon Butler.†

After proceeding about two miles the army halted and detached a small body of men for the purpose of ascertaining the position of the enemy. These accomplished their purpose and found the invading party carousing in apparent security ; but on their way back they unfortunately found two Indians from whom they received a fire and returned the same yet without effect. The settlers advanced rapidly forward, but the Indians having given the alarm, they found that the enemy were drawn up in the order of battle. "Their line was formed a small distance in front of their camp, in a plain thinly covered with pine, shrub oaks and under growth, and extended from the river about a mile to a marsh at the foot of the mountain."‡

On coming in view of the enemy, the Americans immediately displayed their ranks in the order of battle forming a line of equal extent, and attacked from right to left at the same time.§ Col. Zebulon Butler commanded the right wing and was opposed by Col. John Butler, who headed the British troops on the enemy's left, while Col. Dennison commanded

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\*Col. Butler's Letter.

†Chapman's History of Wyoming.

‡Marshall's Life of Washington. §Col. Z. Butler's Letter.



the left wing of the Americans, and was opposed by the Indians who were stationed on the enemy's right.\* The battle commenced at about forty rods distant, but little was effected at the first onset from the obstruction of the woods and brush which intervened. The militia stood the fire well for three or four shots and some part of the enemy began to give way;† but suddenly the wild yell of the savage was heard to ring in the rear of the American left: the Indian leader having conducted a large party of his warriors through the woods and was so successful as to turn Dennison's flank without being perceived. His wing was at the same time charged by the enemy with a heavy and destructive fire and his brave men were cut down very fast around him. That he might gain time and bring his men into better order, he directed them to "*fall back.*" This command was, in the midst of the confusion which prevailed, mistaken for a direction to "retreat," and immediately the whole line broke and every effort to restore order, proved altogether fruitless.

Col. John Butler also managed to turn the right wing of the Americans and by the fire of the British regulars threw that part of the line into confusion.‡

The order of Col. Dennison for his troops to *fall back* having been mistaken by many for a command to *retreat*, they retired with much irregularity and the savages springing in with their hatchets killed many

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\*Stone's life of Brant.

†Col. Z. Butler's letter.

‡Chapman's history of Wyoming.

of the officers and made dreadful havoc among the men. A general rout was given to the American forces, and the Indians pursuing their retreat with wild and terrific yell, added still more to the confusion of the scene. So dreadful was the slaughter, that nearly all of those who went out in the morning, in the full vigor and expectation of health were before evening overtaken and slain by the cruel Indian and the more cruel Tory, so that of the four hundred there were scarcely sixty to return to the protection of the families which had been bereaved, and driven to desperation almost by the news which was brought them of the disasters of the day. Of the militia officers there fell one lieutenant-colonel, one major and ten captains, six lieutenants and two ensigns.—Some of the fugitives escaped by swimming the river, and others by taking refuge in the mountains.\* As the news of the defeat spread through the valley, the women and children also betook themselves to the woods and mountains while others sought refuge in Fort Wyoming. The Indians after satisfying their desire for blood, turned back to secure the spoils of the vanquished.

While these things were transpiring at Wyoming, Mr. Van Campen having attended to the interment of the men who fell near Nescopeck Falls, was advancing towards the place, and had he been a little sooner would have been in the midst of that dreadful massa-

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\*Stone's Life of Brant.

cre, when he met an express on Shawnee Flatts, who informed him "that all was lost, that all the men had been cut off by the British and Indians and that the Fort was about to be surrendered to the invading party." Finding that he could not be of any assistance, but that in all probability if he advanced, himself with his party would fall into the hands of the enemy, he turned about and directed his march back to Northumberland.

While the author was preparing these pages for the press, he has had the pleasure of receiving from Amariah Hammond Esq., of Dansville, Livingston Co. N. Y., a narrative of some of the events which occurred after the battle of Wyoming, that never have yet, to his knowledge appeared in history, and as they will serve to illustrate more fully the scenes of that day, he would beg leave to introduce them, having the highest confidence in the authority and in the correctness of the statements that are made. Mr. Hammond at the time, was a young lad of about eight years of age and recollects the circumstances not only from his own personal observation, but from having heard them related many times since, when he was more capable of deciding upon the probability of their truth, and of this he entertains not the least doubt. He remained during the battle at Fort Forty, with those who from their age and circumstances could not be expected to take an active part in the struggle. He has a perfect recollection of the manner in which the officers came to be unanimously of the opinion that it was best to go out and meet the

enemy. He says in reference to this, that the officers were divided in opinion ; Col. Butler strenuously urging the propriety of going forth, and Col. Dennison as firmly maintaining the expediency of remaining within the Fort until a reinforcement should arrive. Col. Butler, seeing that it could be decided only by a bold measure, marched out in front of the Fort, and called upon all who would go with him, to come out upon the parade ground. In compliance with this request great numbers went out with him and left Col. Dennison with those of his opinion within the Fort, but he receiving it rather as a bravado, immediately remarked, that he “dared show his head wherever *Col. Butler* did,” and then marched out and took his place with him, thus deciding a point that was intimately connected with the fate of that day.

But the circumstances referred to, more particularly concerned his uncle Lebbeus Hammond who was in the heat of the battle, and who survived to witness the scenes which are here related. His story commences at about the close of the conflict when the Indians were collecting the spoils of their victory. In looking over the battle ground, and in wandering through the woods and places adjoining, they not only came across articles which had been left in flight, but also met with stragglers of the defeated army who had not yet found a hiding place, or who were the last to leave the ground which had been so desperately won. These they brought in to a place where the Indians were collected upon the battle ground ; Mr. Lebbeus Hammond was among the number. They

had collected twenty-eight, and made them sit upon the ground in a circle, with their feet extended towards its centre. The warriors stood around them in consultation no doubt, concerning their fate, for they could see their eyes every now and then directed towards them, and by the tones of their voice and gestures they could determine that they were debating some question of importance. It was a question in which the captives felt interested, for their fate they considered to be yet uncertain. They watched therefore with earnestness every look and motion that was made, observing the different feelings that rose and fell within the savage breast, as they were drawn out upon the features of his face. They still continued to bring in prisoners and the debate among the warriors was at the same time in progress. While thus anxiously awaiting the issue of the consultation, an old squaw came up bearing a boy of about twelve or thirteen years of age upon her back. He was a young fifer named William Buck, whose father held the office of captain in one of the regiments, and he had gone out as a musician in the company under his father. He was a beautiful and sprightly lad and was said to have been one of the most promising boys of the settlement. While the squaw was thus bearing him along in evident delight upon her back, intending perhaps to adopt him into her own family, another one of her own sex came up and planted the hatchet in the little boy's head. Young Buck fell off the old squaw's back and sank upon the ground dead. There immediately succeeded a contest between these two



females. The one fell upon the other with the fury of a maniac and others coming up joined in the struggle. This scene occurring at about the distance of four rods from where the warriors were in consultation drew aside their attention from the business before them, and led them to interfere in settling this quarrel. Mr. Hammond watched the progress of this little squabble with intense interest, supposing as the event proved, that its issue would have an influence in deciding his own and his companions' fate. The combatants were soon separated and the warriors returned to their places, but immediately after, the squaw who had been the first aggressor, came forward to the ring and placing her hands upon the shoulders of two of the prisoners, made them lean to one side, while she stepped between them into their midst and advanced towards the centre of their circle with the deadly weapon in her hand. She came in directly towards Mr. Lebbeus Hammond and he supposed that she had marked him for her victim but as she came forward she fixed her eye upon one a little to his left and coming up, planted the hatchet in his head. He sank back upon the ground without a groan. Mr. Hammond, then sat for a moment in awful suspense not knowing which way the cruel wretch would turn.—Another stroke or two and his head might receive the dreadful blow. But the squaw took the one further off to his left and kept going on in this way around the ring. For a few moments his mind was in a state of unutterable anguish and confusion. The thought that seemed to be uppermost was, that he must die—that

he must sit and see each one of his brave companions receive the unerring blow of the tomahawk until it should be his turn to meet the awful stroke. But must he sit still and wait a certain and terrible death without any effort to cling to life?—could there be the least probability of escape even though he should make the attempt? Yet would it not be better to part with life in a struggle, than to pass away in that silent gloom where nothing was heard but the dead noise of the hatchet as it descended upon one head after another as the squaw continued her course around the ring? Oh, how could he bear to await death without nerving his arm to resist the stroke?—Such were the thoughts that flashed across his mind in a moment's space. Each one had his own feelings, and they all sat pale with the emotions that rushed into their bosoms at the thoughts of dying, thus surrounded by their cruel and inhuman foes.

When the squaw had proceeded about half way around the ring, Mr. Hammond, resolved upon making an effort for his life. He had no idea that he could escape, for he saw that the warriors were standing in a row of about three in depth all around them. Yet he resolved to make a trial, deeming it better to meet death in a struggle for life, than tamely to submit when there was a chance for an effort. And now that he had formed his resolution, he wondered that the rest sat motionless and quiet—he was almost surprised that they did not start upon their feet, and dashing the old squaw to the ground, contend from hand to hand with their savage foes until they were clasped in what

would then seem to him the welcome embrace of death. But they all sat in mute expectation of the dreadful moment, and the most of them partly bent over with their countenances sad and pale.

The unseemly executioner kept on her way around the ring and Mr. Hammond perceived that whenever she raised the hatchet, the eyes of all were directed towards her and he thought that this would be a good time for him to make his trial of what he could do. He began to draw up his feet by little and little until he got them pretty nearly under him, and when the squaw raised the hatchet over the third one to his right, he started with a bound and ran with the utmost speed towards the ring of savages, pursuing a line directly forward, and to his surprise the Indians opened to the right and left before him and for a moment seemed to be bewildered by this unexpected movement. He passed through their line without being cut down as he had anticipated and kept on running with all his might. He had not gone over three rods from them before they began to send after him their hatchets. These flew about him for a few moments in every direction—one just grazed the tip of his ear—another passed directly in front of him and stuck in a tree just before him. He had a mind to catch hold of it as it stood quivering in the tree, yet he delayed not a moment in his course, but kept on running with all the energy he could command. When about ten rods distant from them, he looked around and saw that three of their number had just started out in pursuit. He was a very fast runner

and thought that perhaps now he might make his escape. But at no great distance before him was the swamp, and in this he must certainly be overtaken and tomahawked—he dared not turn to the right or left, for in that case they would flank him, he continued to run therefore, directly forward. When he had gone about ten rods farther he looked around and observed that he was gaining upon them and he put to with the greater energy. In a few moments he descended into a little hollow which took him out of their sight, and seeing before him a large pine tree which was partly surrounded by bushes, he sprang in behind it and stood with his back close up against it, hoping thus to elude their observation. The next moment the Indians came bounding by him, one on his left and two on his right; they continued on without stopping and in a few minutes were out of sight. But they would soon come to the swamp and there they would find that they had left him in the rear. They would in all probability return in a short time and would doubtless see him, in his place of concealment. He had no weapon with which he could make a defense and would be very likely to fall at last a victim to savage cruelty. He could not content himself with his situation but looked around to see if he could not find something upon which to lay his hand that would give him the power of offering some resistance to a second capture. He saw at a little distance from him an old pine tree which had lain upon the ground until it was perfectly decayed and out of which had rotted several knots. He stole

from his hiding place and took up one which had quite a lengthy arm with a knot at one end, and placing his knee across it he found that it was capable of sustaining a heavy blow without breaking. This furnished him with just what he desired and he returned to his secret covert with the heart-felt joy that he could now meet an Indian with his tomahawk and feel himself upon an equal footing in case of a combat.— He intended to watch his return, keep his eye upon him if he should come near and whenever he felt conscious that he was seen, to rush out upon him and if possible administer the first blow. He did not remain in his position long, before he saw one of the savages coming towards him looking out as though he were in search of some captive. He stood ready therefore, whenever he came up to give him battle. But when the Indian was within a few rods of the place where he stood partly concealed by the bushes, his eye caught the head of a soldier which was raised up from behind a log, which lay a few rods to Mr. Hammond's right. The Indian immediately proceeded in this direction, but had not gone far when the settler, as he proved to be, arose and with his rifle shot him through and then fell back again behind the log. What a fortunate circumstance was this for Mr. Hammond! He was thus evidently spared from a contest which might have been doubtful, yet he did not know at first whether it would turn to his advantage or not, for the firing might bring other Indians to the spot. But there were guns constantly discharging in every part of the forest so that this particular spot



would not be distinguished from any other, and he felt still more assurance in having a friend near by in case of the return of the remaining two Indians who had started out in his pursuit. Yet these did not come and if they had he was assured that his friend would be prepared to meet them for he could distinctly hear him reloading his rifle.

It was now a little after sun-set and twilight began to throw her mellow shades around him. Soon it would be dark and then he could have an opportunity of seeking the Fort. He kept his position until the dark veil of evening was drawing her folds thicker and closer upon the earth, and then ventured to address in a low tone of voice the companion he had found near him. He made him understand that he was a friend and that they must come near each other for mutual protection and aid. They came together and determined that they would endeavor to seek the Fort. They proceeded on their way cautiously, every now and then coming upon a dead, or a wounded soldier. Mr. Hammond searched for some time among the slain for a gun but the Indians had been over the ground and taken them all away; he therefore went on with his war-club, trusting to this in case of danger. They passed off the battle ground in safety and soon arrived at the Fort. They did not know but what this in the meantime had fallen into the hands of the enemy and they approached it with caution. They crept up silently to the gate and soon could distinguish voices with which they were familiar. Upon making themselves known they were

admitted into the Fort and rejoiced in being permitted to meet once more with some of their friends and in feeling themselves again in a place of security. Mr. Hammond related the scene which transpired after the battle and also his narrow escape and was advised, as there were not a sufficient number of men to defend the Fort and as it would unquestionably have to be surrendered to the enemy the next day, to pursue his course down along the river until he was beyond the reach of the Indians. He did so with his companion and thus made good his escape.

✓ This is perhaps one of the most remarkable instances of daring which can be found in the history of border warfare ; it is certainly wonderful that he effected his escape when he was surrounded by a dense crowd of dusky warriors, and it is not less surprising that he eluded the pursuit of the three who took after him especially when the circumstances were so much against him. But this is the province of a determined, resolute spirit ; it fails not in the hour of danger and when in the midst of the greatest difficulties, it can relieve itself with all the apparent ease in which the strong man of Israel could burst asunder the firm bands of the Philistine.

But the deliberate murder of so many prisoners of war, is doubtless without a parallel in the annals of the revolutionary struggle. It was a most cruel and heart rending scene, and occurring with the other events of the day it serves but too well to justify the popular epithet that has been given to this battle.

It may not be out of place to give a brief history

of those who remained in Fort Forty. Capt. John Hammond, the father of Amariah Hammond, Esq., from whom these statements have been received had been left in command of this Fort, with the force of a few men to take care of the women and children.—From the result of this battle, it appeared that there were sixty women, that had gathered together their families in that fortification, who were upon that day made widows. Numbers after the battle resorted to the Forts on the river below, and in small craft descended the Susquehanna, until they reached places of security. But Capt. Hammond resolved never to abandon his charge until he had made some provision for the families that were thrown upon his sympathies and protection. He therefore waited with anxiety the issue of their fate. He had no idea of defending the Fort, should he have been called upon to surrender, for he had only seven effective men under his command, and with these it would have been perfect folly for him to have undertaken a defense, against the superior numbers of the enemy. He expected therefore, nothing short of being obliged to give up himself and those under his charge to the tender mercies of a cruel foe. On the next day Col. John Butler paraded his men in front of them and sent in a flag which was met by one sent out from the Fort. Capt. Hammond met Col. Butler and agreed upon the terms of capitulation which were, that the Fort should be surrendered to Butler on the next day, and that the prisoners should be protected in their lives and property.

The British officer was kind enough to advise him, if he had any spiritous liquor in store to destroy every drop, for in case the Indians should obtain it, he would be unable with all his power to restrain them from the acts of violence which they might choose to commit. Capt. Hammond profited by his suggestion, and the next morning at the appointed time, both British and Indians were in attendance before the Fort and the gates being opened, they were permitted to enter and take possession of whatever articles had been given up in the terms of capitulation. The Indians as soon as they were admitted began to look around with a sort of idle curiosity, in every part of the Fort. They continued to do so for some time, and seemed as much gratified as little children with the appearance of any thing which is new. But after becoming satisfied with this they began to lay their hands upon whatever they could find, and appropriate it to their own use. They wandered about in the most reckless way, seized upon every thing within their reach and secured it in the most wanton manner. The large and nice feather beds which had been brought into the Fort, they drew out into the open space, ripped them apart and emptied the feathers on the ground ; then, whenever the wind would catch these and bear them into the atmosphere in clouds, they seemed infinitely pleased, and would raise a tremendous yell, and burst their sides, almost, with laughter.

Col. Butler then told Capt. Hammond, that he could not restrain the Indians from pilfering and that the

women, if they had any articles of clothing which they wished to preserve, had better put them on, for in case they were left in sight, they would certainly be taken. The women, therefore, selected whatever they considered of the most value and dressed themselves without much regard to the number of garments they wore. But after the savages had plundered every thing they could find, they began to examine more closely, the dress of the inhabitants, and soon found that they had more on them than was sufficient for the warm days of summer ; so they went to work and stripped off all their fine clothing, leaving nothing upon the women, but a couple of under garments, while they tore from the men every thing but their shirts and pantaloons. Yet so long as they spared them their lives they were willing to suffer these privations. For a time they considered their fate as uncertain, since their treatment had already been so different from what they had been led to anticipate. Col. Butler himself seemed at a loss what to do with so many women and children ; he could not expect to carry them back with him as prisoners to Fort Niagara, without subjecting them to unheard of sufferings, and they could not remain where they were without some means of subsistence, he therefore determined to let them remove to the settlements east of them on the waters of the Delaware.

In accordance with this permission, the men in the Fort with their families, together with those which had been bereaved of a husband and father, and these as we have said, amounted to about sixty, removed



from Fort Forty, and taking a path across the mountains, came, after a journey of many hardships, to the valley of the Delaware, where they found settlers who met them with kindness and hospitality.

The inhabitants who had fled to Fort Wyoming made a surrender to the enemy upon similar terms, and shared alike with them in the violation of the articles of capitulation.\*

But we return again to our subject. After going back to Northumberland, Lieut. Van Campen was sent once more to take charge of the men that had been placed under his command at Fort Wheeler, which he had built in the early part of the present

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\*Col. Stone, in his life of Brant says that "it does not appear that any thing like a massacre followed the capitulation. Nor, in the events of the preceding day, is there good evidence of the perpetration of any specific acts of cruelty, other than such as are usual in the general rout of the battle field." In the story that we have related of Mr. Lebbeus Hammond, it will be readily perceived that there is something at variance with the authority which we have quoted, yet the assurance of Amariah Hammond, Esq., that the circumstances which have been related of his uncle, are correct, having heard him tell them numbers of times and having been pointed by him to the very spot where he sat in the ring, together with the concurrence of Mr. Van Campen, who says that he heard of every circumstance just as it is here related, very soon after the battle, leads us to suppose that there really was a massacre after the battle, though there may have been none after the capitulation. And though it was denied by Capt. Walter N. Butler, in his letter to Gen. Clinton that "any cruelties had been committed at *Wyoming*, either by whites or Indians," still there must have been something upon which to have founded the accusation, and as he says a little further on "though, should you call it *inhumanity*, the killing of *men in arms in the field*, we in that case plead guilty"—he may have considered it as a sufficient apology that they were murdered on the field where the battle was fought; and it may be, however, that the scene which we have described occurred only in the presence of the Indians and they may have kept the knowledge of it entirely among themselves.

year, (1778.) He had not been here long before he received an order from Col. Hunter, to head a company of militia-men, from Lancaster County, and take a circuit round the settlements, to see if there could be found any strolling parties of Indians. These men had come as volunteers from the southern part of Pennsylvania, and as there appeared nothing for them to do, Col. Hunter supposed that they might render their country some service by acting as scouts in the region of the settlements. They had brought their officers with them and were prepared for any duty, but as they were unacquainted with the woods, the command was given to Lieut. Van Campen. Entering with cheerfulness upon a duty, which led him to seek again his accustomed haunts, he immediately prepared himself to march through the woods with the men of Lancaster. They set out in fine spirits and with many declarations of bravery, a trial of which they received upon the first night of their encampment. The place where they tarried for the night, was in an open clearing at a house which had been deserted of its inhabitants.

Mr. Van Campen is accustomed to relate the circumstance with the same feelings of pleasure, which he, no doubt, enjoyed at the time. We will give it in his own language. He says, "upon this expedition I took Capt. Salmon, a particular friend of mine with me. He could enjoy a joke with as great a relish as myself, and was not slow to give some occasion for amusement. We made up a large fire in the house where we encamped and when the militia-men came

to lie down, they took their quarters as near this as they could.

Capt. Salmon and I found that we could have but little benefit of the fire and therefore stationed ourselves very near the door. A large black dog had followed the Lancaster men, and as there was little enough room inside of the house without him, he had been left out of doors to take care of himself. Very soon after we had taken our places upon the floor every thing became quiet and still. Presently the militia men were all snoring away at a lively rate, and seemed to be enjoying themselves perfectly. Just as they were beginning to be visited, in their dreams with the thoughts which had been on their minds during the day, imagining, perhaps, the form of an Indian warrior skulking about under some secret covert, waiting for a favorable opportunity to come out upon his victim, or seeing, it may be, the places around them infested with the presence of their savage and cruel foe, the old dog having become dissatisfied with his quarters in the open air, and in a single berth, came up to the door and endeavored to get in. The door was hung upon wooden hinges, and whenever it was opened, made a cracking kind of noise, which in the night sounded very loud. It did not shut to, very close, but left an opening near the bottom, an inch or more in width. The dog in his endeavor to get in, crowded his nose into this crack, and forced the door a little further open. This movement made such a terrible creaking that it aroused the militia men at once from their slumbers, they immediately raised up, and

began to enquire—"What's that—What's that?"—One said, "I heard a noise,"—another affirmed the same thing, while it was confidently asserted by a third and a fourth one, "It's the Indians—It's the Indians." For a few moments they seemed to be very uneasy, anxiously listening with the expectation of hearing something more. But as there was no further noise, Capt. Salmon, and I, told them that they had better lie down again, that it could not have been any thing very serious. They very soon settled down into a quiet sleep and Salmon whispering in my ear, said, 'we'll play them a little trick the next time that the dog attempts to come in.' With this intention he watched his opportunity, when the dark knight of the chase, should make his second appearance. He soon came up and forced his whole head through the opening that he had made. Just at this moment Salmon pushed against the door with his foot and caught the dog by his neck. The old growler finding himself in this plight gave a loud and most terrific yell. In an instant the men started upon their feet, some of them bawling out, 'the war whoop—the war whoop.'—'The Indians are upon us—the Indians are upon us!' By this time the dog had been relieved and one Goodwin, an Irishman, springing to the door, placed his back against it, and called aloud for help. 'Och,' said he, 'they'll burst the doo-er open—they'll burst the doo-er open!—Give us some help men,—give us some help—the Engens'll be after a comin' in!'

To Salmon and me, who were in the secret, it was

a most comical scene, yet to carry it out, we started up as though there was something to be done, and in a few moments, all of our men as well as ourselves were under arms and ready for action. I ordered Goodwin to leave the door. The poor fellow jumped as though he expected the Indians would make him the first victim of the hatchet. He darted forward in such haste, that he stumbled and fell with his whole length upon the floor. Most of the men were so intently watching the door that this mishap occasioned little merriment to any one but Salmon and me.—We could not help enjoying it, and we were especially pleased to see the earnest expectation of the men who were anticipating the entrance of a flood of Indians, as soon as the door was relieved from the powerful support it had received from Goodwin. But to their astonishment the door did not open, and they could hear no noise from without, not even the tread of a single warrior. I ordered the door to be opened, but to their surprise only one dark visage made its appearance, and that was the face of their old black dog which came quietly walking in, through the space that was opened for him. Salmon could contain himself no longer ; he laughed outright, and told the men that it was nothing but their *dog* that had raised the *Indian war-whoop*. They appeared to be somewhat chagrined at this intelligence, but presently, as they saw they were in no danger, they joined in the laugh, and it passed off as a good joke.”

They remained at this encampment until morning, without any further incident worthy of note, and then



proceeded on their way through the woods. They kept up their march most of the time during the day, and by night had penetrated the wilderness to a considerable distance. They met with no enemy, but advanced with the same care and circumspection, which they would have observed in passing through a region, where they expected every moment to receive an attack. Mr. Van Campen chose for his place of rest through the night, a low piece of ground that was thickly covered with a growth of young trees. It was too cold to do without a fire, and he selected this spot that its light might not be discovered at any great distance through the woods. The place was called Eve's swamp ; here they encamped for the night.— They built only one fire, and that mostly from necessity, lest, by kindling too many lights, they might decoy some party of savages, which might be hovering around, and thus draw upon themselves their own destruction.

While they were resting here there occurred a little incident which will serve to illustrate a peculiar characteristic of Mr. Van Campen's mind. We will give it in his own words.

“ While we were at Eve's Swamp I had occasion to resort to a little stratagem by which the courage of my Lancaster men was again tried. They had recovered from the fright occasioned by the *war-whoop* of their black dog, and when they came to lie down at night to rest, they were disposed to seek the most comfortable situation which the camp afforded, without having any regard for the convenience of

their officers. They were anxious to look out, each one for himself, and that they might be in as good quarters as possible, they rolled themselves in their blankets and encamped down by the fire, getting as near to it as they well could without being quite roasted. Here, my friend Salmon and I, found them occupying a most enviable position about the fire. We had been looking around in every direction to ascertain the comparative safety in which we were to lodge through the night, and upon coming up to our men we found that they had already disposed themselves to their satisfaction and that we should have to lie down without much choice as to our place of lodging. We therefore camped down upon the best ground we could find, and placed ourselves in the attitude of sleep. We lay quite comfortably for some time, yet we soon found ourselves growing so cold, that we could not possibly obtain any rest. I thought I would try and start them as we had done the night before and if I could succeed, we might perhaps gain a place a little nearer the fire. With this object in view, I took my hatchet and struck the handle of it against a small staddle, which stood near me, and made a loud, cracking noise with the stroke. This had the desired effect, for the men instantly took the alarm and the enquiry passed from one to another,—‘did n’t you hear a stick crack just now,—there must be some one around.’ One said that he ‘heard it plainly,’ and another, that he ‘could hear them walk’—meaning the Indians. After hearing them talk upon the subject in this manner, for a few minutes, I spoke to them and

told them they had better lie down, that probably no enemy was near, that it was some thing else which had made the noise, and that there was no occasion for them to be afraid. You need rest, said I,—better lie down and keep quiet. In accordance with this advice they dropped down again, and were soon in the embraces of sleep. After waiting until they had all, as I supposed, very nearly forgotten their troubles, I took my tomahawk and gave the tree a second crack. This started them more than it had done before. They now began to feel pretty confident that the enemy must be around them lurking through the woods. Every one was wide awake and ready to move. One swore he would not stay where he was ; another said he would not lie near the fire to be shot at, and the agitation among them seemed to be very general. Salmon and I let them talk until they had opened their minds in full, and I then suggested that it might be advisable for them to take their stations, at a little distance from the fire and keep a good look out, and *I would camp down, with Capt. Salmon, close to it*, and if any thing stirred or showed signs of the approach of an enemy, they should give me notice. They continued to watch, and took their turns in coming to the fire to warm ; my companion and I kept our places and were quite comfortable till daylight. I said nothing, in the morning, of course, about the tomahawk handle, but was willing to allow them all the credit they were disposed to take to themselves for their alertness in watching through the night."

Nothing further of any interest occurred during their

trip. The route which they took was one which was usually, pursued by the scouts from this section of country. They first proceeded to the head waters of Green Creek, crossed over through Eve's Swamp to Little Fishing Creek, thence to the Chilisquaka, and from this directed their march to the Muncey Mountains, and over these to Muncey Creek and ascended this for nearly a day's travel. They saw upon their route no traces, which served to give the least information concerning the presence of any Indians. It was becoming late in the season and in all probability the savage would not again visit them before the opening of another year, at least, this was their hope, and staying their progress here, they began their march homeward, pursuing nearly the same circuit which they had taken on their way out. They therefore returned to their stations, Lieut. Van Campen to Fort Wheeler and the militia men to a Mr. McClure's farm where they held their quarters.

Soon after this, Mr. Van Campen projected another expedition, a little different from that which we have just given, yet equally as exciting, and which promised to be as fruitful in adventure. It was not unusual for small parties to disguise themselves as Indians and go out into those parts of the country, infested by them and ascertain their number and position. Lieut. Van Campen, fearful that there might be some part of their foe lurking around in the region, took with him his friend Capt. Salmon, and went out in disguise to make discoveries.

"Immediately after our return," says Mr. Van

Campen, "Salmon and I went out as spies alone.— Having overstayed our time, the officers of the Lancaster militia and the people of the vicinity became concerned about us, fearing that we were either killed or had been made prisoners.

The reason of our long absence was, that we had some expectations of making discoveries of the enemy at a notch in Nob Mountain, through which we knew they were accustomed to pass whenever they came down in parties to attack the settlements, or to way lay and shoot the people on and near the river. We lingered around this point till it became so late in the season, that we were confident no Indians would make their appearance before the next year, and therefore set out on our return homeward. On our way we ascended the summit of an oak hill, whence we could have a fair view of the valley below us, through which we were to pass. Upon looking down into it with some attention, we saw plainly a party of men who appeared to be headed by some officer. From the course of their march, we concluded that they would ascend the hill, where we were, and pass directly by us. Who they were, we did not know, they might be the Lancaster men, or they might not. At all events we concluded from their appearance that they were inexperienced soldiers, and we determined to make a trial of their courage. We fixed our eye upon a large oak tree, which was in the line of the officer's march, and thought our best course would be to let him come up to this, and then plant a couple of balls into it two or three feet above his head. When



he came to the point upon which we had agreed, we both fired from different stations, then raised the war-whoop and began to jump from tree to tree, thus making it appear as though great numbers of Indians were on the ground. The result was just what we expected. The militia men did not wait a moment, but immediately turned, took to their heels and ran with all possible speed back to the Fort. It was about five miles distant and when they arrived there they gave a great alarm, said they had been fired at by a large party of Indians, that they heard them whoop and saw them jump. The officer said that some of their balls went directly into a tree above his head and did but just miss him.

“Salmon and I came in the same day and great joy was expressed upon seeing us alive and safe. There was much shaking of hands and many congratulations. They told us of the very narrow escape we had made and enquired if we did not see Indians? No : but we had seen mockasin tracks, meaning our own, and that on the route we were going we heard firing, and supposed it must have been from the same party that attacked the scout. The facts of the case, we kept to ourselves as a secret, which it was not prudent to divulge.”

We have now given the reader an account of the principal scenes with which Mr. Van Campen was occupied during the year 1778. In some of them he was brought into the presence of danger, yet in none is he made to appear in any very important action. But they were such as might be expected to occur, in

the varied and hazardous service which was performed by those who were engaged in defending the frontier settlements.

We have, once or twice, brought the militia from Lancaster County, into rather a ridiculous position, yet the charge of cowardice cannot be made against them, any more than the militia generally, from other parts of the country. And there is no reason for supposing that they acted any differently, than would be natural for men, who were placed under similar circumstances. They had been altogether unaccustomed to the field, had never been hardened by an exposure to danger, and having heard, no doubt, of the terrible and cruel nature of savage warfare, and having partaken of the fear, which had every where been created by the recital of his bloody deeds, it is not wonderful that the least sign of his approach, should have aroused them to the care of their own safety. Nor was their flight from what they supposed to be a large party of Indians, a circumstance altogether without a parallel in the history of the war. Our brave Washington had occasion frequently to complain of the instability of the militia-men, so much so, that he was led to believe that they did more injury to the service than good. So that the want of firmness in the hour of danger, whether real or supposed, did not belong to the militia from Lancaster any more, than to those from any other section of the country.

From the events that have been given of this year, it will be seen that the depredations committed upon

the frontiers of Pennsylvania, by the Indians during this time, were not few. They were such as to cast a feeling of dread over the minds of those who inhabited this region, while at the same time, it stimulated them to greater exertions in providing the means of defense. But the savages had not confined their operations to the back settlements of Pennsylvania only. The annals of the New York frontier, are also filled with instances of plunder, burning and death. The slaughter they committed at Cherry Valley, was scarcely less terrible in its nature, than that which occurred at Wyoming. Late in the season of this same year, they made a descent upon this beautiful and fertile region. The inhabitants who had received some intelligence of their design, sent out a party to watch for their coming, and give the news of their approach; but this party fell into the hands of the enemy. While, therefore, the settlement was uninformed of its danger, the stealthy Indian came near its borders during the hours of night, and while as yet the stillness of morning had scarcely been succeeded by the busy hum of day, he came out from different points upon the unsuspecting inhabitant, and simultaneously the torch was applied to the quiet dwellings of the neighborhood, and the peaceful citizens fell victims to the tomahawk and scalping knife of the savage.

Families that were enjoying the luxury of domestic quiet, were suddenly interrupted by the fearful yell of the savage, or by the menacing aspect of the heart-scared Tory. At one moment the happy inmates of

a dwelling were beholding each other with a complacent smile, and the next, some of them were lying in the agonies of death, and others, again, hastened into a hopeless captivity. One instance especially, among several, which occurred at this time, has been related—a landmark as it were, of the utmost bound of barbarity.

The family of Mr. Wells, a most respectable and influential man, had assembled for the purpose of devotion and were bowing together in the attitude of worship. While the voice of prayer was ascending on high, and the minds of all were directed to the Giver of every good, both savage and Tory burst into the house, flourished the hatchet over the head of the supplicating man, and ere his words had died upon his lips, his spirit was sent on its way to God. In a few moments his whole family were with him, inhabitants of the spirit-world. “His sister, Jane, “was distinguished alike for her beauty, her accomplishments, and her virtues. As the savages rushed “into the house, she fled to a pile of wood on the “premises, and endeavored to conceal herself. She “was pursued and arrested by an Indian, who with “perfect composure, wiped and sheathed his dripping “knife, and took his tomahawk from his girdle. At “this instant a Tory, who had formerly been a domestic “in the family, sprang forward and interposed in her “behalf—claiming her as a sister. The maiden too, “who understood somewhat of the Indian language, “implored for mercy. But in vain. With one hand “the Indian pushed the Tory from him, and with the

“other planted his hatchet deep into her temple!”\*

In a warfare like this, in which the heart of mercy was barred to every entreaty, and where the imploring look was visited only by the stroke of the tomahawk, how much was there to create apprehension and dread in the minds of those, who were exposed to an attack from this fearful enemy! The sympathies of the American people were universally excited by the suffering of the inhabitants of the frontier settlements, and an enquiry arose concerning the best method of affording them protection.

It was the opinion of Gen. Washington, that the only way in which the Indians could be effectually resisted, would be to send a powerful detachment of men into their own country, which should assault their strong holds and places of rendezvous, destroy their villages and lay waste their plantations. Such a force would be likely to bring the Indians together into one body, and thus cause them to withdraw from lurking around the borders of the settlements.— It would also make them fearful concerning their own safety, as well as that of their families, and by driving them from their accustomed haunts, and especially from their plantations, they would be more in want of the means of subsistence, and would be in a condition less favorable for making a bold attack upon any part of the frontiers.

The Indians had already become quite bold ; in each

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\*Stone's Life of Brant.



succeeding year they were found to be more annoying than they had been at any time previous, and it was thought to be highly important that a more enlarged and decisive campaign should be undertaken against them. This had been determined upon during the present year, yet through a failure in the means with which to carry it out, nothing important had been accomplished and it was not until the next year that the project was entered upon in any way corresponding with its design.

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Since most of the preceding chapter has been placed in print, the author has had the pleasure of perusing the late work of William L. Stone, entitled the "Poetry and History of Wyoming," and he is happy to find in it, a confirmation of the statements which he has made concerning the massacre at that place, as will be seen from the following passage, quoted from that work. "During the flight to Fort Forty, the scene was that of horrible slaughter. Nor did the darkness put an end to the work of death. No assault was made upon the fort that night; but many of the prisoners taken were put to death by torture. The place of these murders was about two miles north of Fort Fort<sup>at,</sup> had upon a rock, around which the Indians formed themselves in a circle. Sixteen of the prisoners, placed <sup>Mr.</sup> a ring around the rock, near the river, were held by <sup>Indian-</sup> stout Indians, while the squaws struck their heads <sup>the</sup>

open with the tomahawk. *Only one individual, a powerful man named Hammond, by a desperate effort, escaped.* In a similar ring, a little farther north of the rock, nine persons were murdered in the same way."

The author has taken the opportunity to consult again with Amariah Hammond, Esq., in reference to the above particulars, and is informed by him that there must be some mistake in the assertion that the prisoners "were held by stout Indians, while the squaws struck their heads open with the tomahawk," though it is almost incredible to believe that men could sit still, to be murdered in the way they were. But he says it must be a fact, since, if it had been otherwise he would have been sure to have known it, having heard his uncle relate the circumstances hundreds of times and having been told that he also would have sat, just as the rest did if the squaw had not gone in a direction from him, and thus given him time for reflection, for his mind was so much confused at first, that he could not, for a few moments, compose his thoughts and it was not until she had proceeded more than half way round the ring that he determined upon the course he would pursue, and then it was he wondered why his companions could sit still in and receive the blow; but they remained quiet, with in a their eyes closed, until the deadly weapon descended upon into their heads. He is confident also about the num-

ber in the ring which we have given as twenty-eight.

Mr. Hammond had another uncle, Mr. William Hammond, in the battle of Wyoming, who fell, while  
\*Still making his escape, by the hand of the inhuman Tory.

He had fled from the battle ground, had reached the river and was swimming across, when he was hailed by an acquaintance of his by the name of Secord, who was a Tory. They had both been brought up together at Wyoming, had often engaged with each other in the common sports of the day, and had been on terms of great familiarity. This Secord, approaching the river's brink, called out—"Bill Hammond, is that you?" The reply was, "Yes." Secord then advised him to return, saying that he would give him protection. Hammond said, "No : I can swim across the river and make good my escape." "You cannot" was the answer, "the Indians are on the opposite side and will certainly kill you,—better come back, I am certain that I can secure your safety—I will claim you as a brother." Hammond thereupon returned and when he came near the shore Secord stepped down a little into the water, took him by the hand and with the other upraised with the tomahawk, planted it in his head. The body of Hammond was then permitted to float down the river, until it came opposite Fort Forty, where it was recognized by his brother, Capt. John Hammond, and was taken on shore. A man by the name of Tubbs, had been concealed near the place where this dreadful scene occurred, and when he came into the fort at night, apprized them of the manner in which Hammond had been killed.

Mr. Van Campen relates a similar instance of a Mr. Shoemaker, who was making his escape in a like manner. He was accosted while swimming across the

river by one Decker, who had formerly lived in a little house on Shoemaker's farm, and being in rather destitute circumstances, and having a large family to provide for, received from him many kindnesses, which should have bound him to Shoemaker by cords of eternal gratitude. But at this time he was a Tory, and as he saw his old benefactor swimming towards the opposite bank, he called him by name, told him that he, Shoemaker, had always been a friend of his, and that now he was glad to have it in his power to offer him protection. "Come back," said he, "and your life shall certainly be spared." Shoemaker was induced to return, but as he came up to the bank, Decker basely violated his word, and returned the kindness he had received, by a blow of his hatchet which sank deep into the other's head.—Surely these were scenes from which every heart must recoil with just indignation ; but they were such as transpired in that eventful struggle and they have since lived in the memory, as instances of the extreme cruelty which was then practiced.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Mr. Van Campen serves in the campaign of Sullivan in the year 1779.—Anecdote.—Capture of Freeling's Fort—Sent with a party to lie in ambush—Sent to reconnoiter an Indian camp—Commands an advance guard—Action at Hog Back Hill—Junction with the Army under Clinton—Battle at Newtown Point.*

IN accordance with a determination to punish the Indians, to which we have just alluded in the preceding chapter, together with the direction of Congress, to the Commander-in-chief, by which he was instructed "to take the most effectual means for protecting the inhabitants, and chastising the Indians for their continued depredations," an expedition was planned, which contemplated carrying the war into the very heart of the territory occupied by the Six Nations.—These were the most warlike tribes, and presented altogether the most formidable opposition, which the Americans received from those of them, who were in alliance with Great Britain. By their energy in battle they had gained the ascendancy over most of the other tribes and held in their possession a wide extent of country. \*They were considerably removed from barbarism, cultivated their lands and in their social regulations partook of the order which belongs to

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\*Thatcher's Indian Biography.



civilized communities. It was proposed to enter the region occupied by this confederation, lay waste their villages, destroy their crops and whatever else could be found, by which the Indian interests might be afflicted.

Gen. Sullivan was appointed to the principal charge of the expedition which was formed of two divisions, one of which under his command was to march from Pennsylvania, up the Valley of the Susquehanna to Tioga Point, where it was to meet the other which was to come from the north, under the command of Gen. Clinton, and having formed a junction with each other, they were to proceed up the valley of the Chemung, to the rich and beautiful country of the Seneca and Cayuga tribes.

Mr. Van Campen was engaged in this enterprise which occupied the summer of 1779. His history during that year we find mostly in connection with the campaign, and shall be led, therefore, to speak of it more in detail. He was occupied for two or three months previous to the time of Gen. Sullivan's entrance upon his march, in collecting military stores. He acted under the title of Quartermaster, and performed in this capacity the most laborious service. Being obliged to attend to the purchase of provisions, obtaining them of the settlers up and down the river and having to oversee the shipping and unshipping of these, he was engaged for a time with nothing but the details of business. Gen. Sullivan held his headquarters at Wyoming, and at this point were to be collected all the supplies of the army. This was done

by means of boats which plied up and down the river. On one of his trips with these, Mr. Van Campen fell in company with a young fellow whose appearance betrayed the possession of an unbounded vanity, which was doubtless the occasion of his coming in contact with the hero of our story. He was a young man not far from twenty years of age, a little above the ordinary stature and possessed a very well proportioned frame. He was walking on the bank of the river with all the self-complacency imaginable, and as Mr. Van Campen, was coming up to his boats, which were moored near by, he approached him and very politely enquired, if he would like to be laid on his back. Perceiving that the youngster was gifted with a very high idea of his bodily powers, and hoping, though he had been for some time out of practice, that he might be able to give a lesson which he would be likely to remember, and which might be of some advantage to him in future, he replied that he had "no objections, if it could be done fairly."

They accordingly prepared themselves for a wrestle and came up and took their hold. It was upon a little grass plot near the river, where the bank was considerably high and steep. Van Campen, before he had taken hold, determined in his own mind what disposition he would make of the fellow, and in their manœuvres played for his purpose. He managed to get him near the edge of the bank, and when he found that he had him in the right position, fell back, raised him with his hands, and knees and threw him over his head down the bank, landing him head fore-

most in the sand and water, partly under one end of a boat. The unfortunate youth gathered in his mouth a goodly supply of sand and water, and might, perhaps, have been in some danger of being drowned, but there were men by, who helped him out, and who, though they were but too well pleased with the manner in which he had been served, were nevertheless disposed to render him every assistance he seemed to require. He said, after his mouth was cleared so that he was able to speak, addressing his antagonist, "I will remember you for this, sir."—To which was replied, "You are welcome to think of me as long as you live." He never sought, however, to wrestle with him again.

The young man had, no doubt, some reason to complain of the treatment which he received, as being a little too harsh, but as he was the first aggressor, and as his calamity was brought upon him by his unpardonable vanity, he cannot claim the sympathy which he might have otherwise received.

While Mr. Van Campen was occupied around Wyoming in collecting supplies for the army, an event occurred in the vicinity, which affected him deeply and which spread a general gloom over the inhabitants of that region. He was not personally interested in the affair, any more than an intimate acquaintance with the principal actors in the scene, would lead him to sympathize with their misfortune, and this was of such a nature, that it might be questioned whether he would have been any more afflicted had he been himself engaged in the occurrence. It

was after the capture of Freeling's Fort, which took place in the early part of July. The Fort was situated on a stream known by the name of Warrior's Run, which empties into the West Branch of the Susquehanna, a few miles above Northumberland.—It was commanded by Capt. John Lytle who surrendered to a large party of British and Indians, headed by an officer named McDonald. In the articles of capitulation it was agreed that the men should be prisoners, the women and children set at liberty, and that the property should belong to the captors. No lives were lost.

At about the same time the news was spread abroad that the Fort was in danger of being taken. Capt. Hawkins Boone, with a company of thirty as brave men as ever marched to the field of combat, was sent to its relief. They had no idea that the Fort had fallen into the hands of the enemy, and they marched on without the least suspicion, but that they were to be received by friends. They therefore advanced with the utmost dispatch, and not until they were in the very midst of the enemy, did they discover their mistake. They immediately put their arms in requisition and fought for a time, with the fury almost of desperadoes, but they could not withstand the numbers by which they were overpowered—not beaten. Most of that noble band were slain and among them, their patriotic and gallant commander. The news of their disaster spread rapidly through the settlements and it fell heavily and unexpectedly upon many hearts.—Parents mourned the loss of sons, wives of husbands,

and the young felt themselves bereaved of noble and brave companions. Yet this event had little other effect upon the great majority of the people, than to nerve their minds to a more deadly struggle, and make them engage with a more determined spirit in the prosecution of the war. But the women mourned over their loss in silence and children continued to shed their tears in solitude, at the recollection of parents whom they were never again to behold.

It may be well to remark here, that Capt. Lytle was never censured for the surrender he had made to the enemy. He was a brave officer, and had it been in his power to have made a defense, he would not have been backward in resisting the foe, but his force was very small, and that of the opposite party amounted to hundreds, so that the disparity of their numbers destroyed all hope of successfully withstanding an attack. The Indians, immediately after they had overcome the company under Capt. Boone, learning that a force was collecting to march under Sullivan into their own country, went back again and stationed themselves at Chemung.

On the 31st of July, Gen. Sullivan, having completed his arrangements, began to ascend the river from Wyoming towards Tioga Point. At the same time a fleet of boats under the command of Commodore John Morrison, sailed up the Susquehanna, bearing in them the stores for the army. "His baggage occupied one hundred and twenty boats and two thousand horses, the former of which were arranged in regular order upon the river, and were propelled against the stream



by soldiers with setting poles, having a sufficient guard of troops to accompany them. The horses, which carried the provisions for the daily subsistence of the troops, passed along the narrow path in single file, and formed a line extending about six miles.—The boats formed a beautiful appearance as they moved in order from their moorings, and as they passed the Fort received a grand salute, which was returned by the loud cheers of the boatmen. The whole scene formed a military display surpassing any which had ever been exhibited at Wyoming, and was well calculated to form a powerful impression upon the minds of those lurking parties of savages which still continued to range upon the mountains from which all these movements were visible for many miles.<sup>77\*</sup>

Mr. Van Campen, being obliged as Quartermaster, to have the care of the stores, ascended the stream in one of the boats. He attended to the distribution of the provisions among the several captains and companies of boatmen, and gave an account of the same to the Commissary General of the Army.

They reached Tioga on the 11th of August, and there halted until Gen. Clinton, should join them with the forces under his command. In the mean time the Indians had been concentrating their forces at Chemung, a large Indian village situated about eleven miles above, on a branch bearing the same name.

While remaining here, they proved to be very

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\* Chapman's History of Wyoming.

troublesome neighbors, since they waylaid every path to watch and cut off any small party that might be sent out from the army, or any individual who should unfortunately stray too far from the camp. They inflicted several injuries of this kind, in cutting off small companies who were sent out to look after the pack horses, which belonged to the army, and which had been suffered to run loose in the woods.

They were wont to wander off to what were called Queen Easter's Flatts, and to a plain which was about six miles distant, covered with underbrush, and a few large oak trees.

It was the wish of Gen. Sullivan that the Indians might receive their own pay, and he thought that by sending a small party who would proceed with caution to some place in the vicinity of the plain and there form an ambush, that the movements of these savages might be discovered. Having formed his plan he called upon Mr. Van Campen and desired him to head the party and advance to the prosecution of his design. The plain six miles above on the Chemung, was fixed upon as the place of their maneuvers. It was their intention to go to this spot or near it, station a sentinel in the bushy top of some oak tree, have a number of men concealed, and then upon a concerted signal to intercept, if possible, a party of Indians as it crossed the plain. Major Adam Hoops, one of Sullivan's aids, brought Mr. Van Campen his instructions, directing him to go as near the enemy as he judged it prudent, and there make his arrange-

ments for carrying out the plan—which was, to let the sentinel in the tree-top, watch for the Indians, and whenever he should discover any, he was to let down a cord, loaded with lead to which was attached a piece of white paper ; this he was to make descend a given distance for a given number of the enemy, and should he be passing to the right or left, notice was to be given of this also.

Having received his instructions, Mr. Van Campen took with him a small company of men, and proceeding to the appointed place, selected the tree and the spot where he laid in ambush. His sentry with the cord prepared for giving the signal, ascended to the point of observation, where, seating himself upon a limb and leaning against the body of the tree, he could overlook the plain, and easily distinguish any movement upon its borders. From their ambush they had a fair view of the sentinel and each one kept his eye in the direction, to discover the first notice that should be given of the enemy. After watching for about an hour, they saw the paper begin slowly to descend until it fell about five feet, and then stopped. By this they understood that five Indians were in sight. Van Campen spoke to his men—"My good fellows we'll soon have sport—there are but five of them."—Presently the paper was lowered about five feet more. He then observed, "We'll have something more to do—there are ten of them." The paper continued to descend very gradually until it had reached in all the distance of about fifteen feet. He then added, "We shall now, my brave fellows have enough of

it, for we are nearly equally manned." Before the words were fairly out of his mouth, his sentry came tumbling down through the limbs to the ground and fell near the body of the tree. The cause of the descent of the paper then flashed across their minds, and they began to laugh at their mistake. It was but too apparent that the sentry had fallen asleep and had unconsciously let the paper fall, and that he himself, losing his balance, had come down headlong with it. The soldiers were not a little pleased with the event, but to the sentry it was quite a serious disaster. One of his shoulders was put out of joint, and in other respects he was somewhat injured. Yet, at a time when a broken or a dislocated limb, was as little thought of as the slightest injury would be, when removed from scenes of danger, this little misfortune passed off with as little thought, and with as merry a heart as though no pain had been inflicted.

After remaining for some time without making any discoveries, Mr. Van Campen returned and made his report to Gen. Sullivan. The General asked him how he liked the plan?—To which he replied, "The plan is a good one, but I came near losing a man by it."

"How so, sir."

"Why, my sentry fell asleep and came down the tree in a hurry head foremost, and unjointed a shoulder."

"Why didn't you dispatch the rascal?"

"I had no orders, sir, to kill my own men," was the reply. The General and his officers laughed.

Having performed this service much to the satisfaction of his commanding officer, Van Campen was

entrusted with another enterprise, more hazardous than the one we have just related, but one which well suited his adventurous spirit. Gen. Sullivan contemplated an attack upon the Indians, who were stationed a little above, and wishing to ascertain something in reference to the number and situation of the enemy, he sought one, upon whom he could rely, that he might send him to inspect the enemy, as they were encamped for sleep.

The selection was made ; and, as the result proved, Van Campen was selected for this dangerous enterprise. Yet he did not shrink from its performance. Danger, was to him, little else than a name. He had no feelings of dread lurking around him, at the thought of visiting the resting place of the savage, in the still hour of night. He loved the excitement of adventure even though it should make his heart-strings beat quick, while he was treading upon the rude verge of life. But he did not anticipate death ;—a buoyant spirit raised him above the fear of this, and he gladly entered upon the proposed undertaking. Though he felt confident that he should be able to perform the service and return in safety, he omitted no precaution which a prudent mind could suggest as affording any protection against harm. He furnished himself with an Indian dress, consisting of a breech-cloth, leggins, moccasins and a cap ornamented with feathers. Then painting himself the color which became the character of his dress, he arrayed himself in the savage costume, and with a companion habited the same way, left the camp after dark, and proceeded to



execute his commission. The two advanced with the utmost caution to a fording place in the Chemung, which they expected to find guarded, yet there was no one here to stay their progress, and they crossed over and ascended a mountain, which brought them in sight of their enemy's fires. Here they stood for a few moments, casting their eyes over the plain below them, and beholding the lights that here and there studded its dark surface. They talked over the hazardous night's work before them, and then began to descend and draw near the encampment. They advanced slowly and cautiously, keeping a good lookout for the foe, since they well knew that should they fall into his hands, their lives would pay the price of their intrepidity. He might see them, however, when they were not aware of his presence, and come up behind them and cut them down; yet, fortunately, their approach was undiscovered. They waited until he had laid down to sleep, and were, as they hoped, in its sweet embrace, and then walked softly to the verge of the camp. Here Mr. Van Campen left his companion, with the direction that he should remain until his return, but added, that in case he should hear the report of guns, he might then suppose that there was trouble, and should get back to the army the best way he could. With slow and cautious tread, Van Campen approached the fires of the enemy. There were several of these which made separate encampments, and the Indians were all lying around them in profound sleep. He came into their midst and could see the dusky forms of the warriors every

where about him. He could hear the low hum that arose from the sleeping men, and could every now and then see one of them turn over or move in some way to better his position. This was a dangerous place, and prudence would not allow him to stay here long, yet he remained until he had counted the number of those that were lying together in one encampment, then counted the number of fires and estimated their force to consist of about seven hundred. Having thus performed his duty he returned to his companion undiscovered, and they both went back to their own men in safety. It was about the dawn of day when they reached the camp, where they were joyfully received after their uncertain adventure and having made his report to the satisfaction of the General, Van Campen sought rest after the watchings and fatigue of the night.

Had there been no other instance by which to establish the fact of Mr. Van Campen's courage and skill, this enterprise would be sufficient to place it beyond the possibility of doubt. It was one which would not, it is likely, have been successfully performed by a rough, unskillful hand. It required the cautious glance and the wary tread of the Indian himself, and in its accomplishment may be traced that natural shrewdness of character, for which Mr. Van Campen has been so much distinguished.

In the afternoon of the same day on which he returned, one of Sullivan's aids, Mr. Adam Hoops, came to Van Campen's tent, and requested him to wait upon the General. He went, and as he came

up to him, saw that the General appeared to be in a very good humor, for he very pleasantly said, as soon as he had approached near, "Well, sir, you have learned the way to Chemung—what say you about leading the advance guard against the Indians?" and added—"It's a post of honor and of danger too."—"That will suit me," replied Van Campen, "I am ready to meet danger." "Go then," said he, "select your men and be ready." In obedience to this order he prepared immediately for the expedition, made choice of his men and was ready to start at a moment's warning. The order soon came for them to set out and they took up their line of march a little after sunset.

Gen. Samuel Hand, of the Pennsylvania line had been appointed to command the detachment, which consisted of eleven hundred men. Mr. Van Campen marched on before the main body, at the head of twenty-six men, having orders to advance as far as the Narrows, and there wait until the whole should come together. To this point he directed his march and there waited until he was joined by the others, when they all received from Gen. Hand, the low but spirited order, "Soldiers, cut your way through—cut your way through." They did so, and entered the Indian camp and village at the break of day. But the Indians had left and apparently in haste from the marks which they saw betokening a flight. They found every thing as it had been left, in the utmost confusion. They had perhaps heard that the enemy was approaching. From the marks of their

trail it was discovered that they had gone up the river, and it was concluded to rest a few moments and then pursue on after them.

Setting fire to the village, they marched on in pursuit, and following up the river about two miles, they came to a ridge called from its shape, Hog Back Hill. As they drew near this place, Van Campen remarked to his men, "Here is a place which seems to be formed by nature for an Indian ambuscade ; look out my brave fellows, we shall be likely to have it as hot as we can sup it." Every eye was then turned to the hill and as they began to ascend, they could see the bushes on its top tremble, and in a moment after, the muzzles of rifles darted out towards them, as thick as hatchel teeth. In an instant a deadly fire followed, and sixteen of Van Campen's men were shot down at his side, the most of them killed, some only wounded. There was not a moment for reflection. Another fire would sweep the remainder of the advance guard, by the board, and nothing then, could be done, until the main body should come up. The path that Van Campen's men were pursuing, led along the river's brink ; as quick as thought he ordered his men to reserve their fire and throw themselves down behind the bank of the river. " Throw yourselves down the bank," said he, " and don't fire till I tell you—they will be out in a moment to scalp, and then will come our turn—let every shot tell." They had not more than taken their position, when six or seven stout fellows rushed out with knife and tomahawk in hand, to kill the wounded and take the scalps. It was

then their turn to fire. Every shot counted one.—Van Campen took their leader, and his men took care of the others.

Gen. Hand came on immediately with quick step, advanced within a few rods of them, ordered his men to fire, and then charge with the bayonet.—They did so, and soon routed the enemy and put them to flight. After this battle they returned with their dead and wounded and came back the next night to their former camp.

Upon examining his clothes after the battle, Mr. Van Campen found that there had been pretty sharp shooting, for he discovered that two or three bullet holes had been made through them, and that a ball had just grazed his side. They had no further encounter with the enemy until the whole force was brought together by the arrival of Gen. Clinton.

Gen. Clinton, as we have remarked, was expected to descend the Susquehanna, and meet Gen. Sullivan at Tioga Point. He had made every preparation for this purpose and as soon as he received from Gen. Sullivan a notice of his advance to Tioga, he set out immediately for that place. By a masterly stroke of generalship, he contrived his descent so as not only to hasten his speed down the river, but also spread at the same time, the ideas of alarm throughout the ranks of the enemy. He had dammed up the outlet of the Otsego Lake, which forms one of the principal branches of the Susquehanna, and by the accumulation of a large body of water, was ready, whenever he received the order to march, to open his reservoir and



be wafted by its swelling tide into the vicinity of the other army. Soon the order came, and he opened his flood gates, embarked upon the stream and was borne along in triumph upon its accumulated wave. This sudden and unexpected rise of water not only destroyed many of the Indian plantations for the year, but spread dismay throughout their ranks, for they ascribed the cause of this mighty inundation to the interposition of the "Great Spirit," who thus manifested his displeasure with them.

It might indeed have created alarm that such a flood should suddenly burst upon them in a dry time, when the river was low, and when there had been no powerful rains, by which the occurrence might have been explained. Thus, the expedition which was served by a flotilla of more than two hundred boats, descended the river, through a wild and mostly uncultivated region, upon a stream which had never before been navigated only by the little bark canoe.

To the other division of the army which was at Tioga, this sudden rise of water in the river was almost equally unaccountable. They viewed the flood as it came sweeping along over the banks, which were not sufficient to contain it, and wondered at the cause of this singular phenomenon. While they were still held in admiration of the unexpected majesty of the stream, their eyes caught the appearance of Clinton and his host, as they were quietly floating down upon the bosom of the mighty current.

By the junction of the force under Clinton with the troops under Sullivan, the whole army, which was to

march into the Indian country amounted to five thousand. The preparation for this campaign had occupied a considerable time and the Indians had the opportunity of becoming well advised of the movements that were going on against them and were determined not to let the expedition advance without making some resistance. They had collected their forces and had made preparation to oppose its progress at a point, which they had selected with much judgment a little above the Narrows. They were differently estimated at from eight to fifteen hundred, including Indians, British troops and rangers. Their own authority fixes the number at five hundred and fifty Indians, who were led by their famous warrior Brant, and two hundred and fifty whites, commanded by Colonels John Butler, Sir John and Guy Johnson, Major Walter N. Butler, and Capt. McDonald.

As Sullivan's army advanced they determined to risk a general engagement at the point where they had taken their position. This they had fortified by a breast work of logs and trees, which was formed upon a rising piece of ground and extended nearly a mile in length. The river winding around their rear and protecting their right wing, their front and left were only exposed to an attack. A little stream now called Baldwin's Creek ran in front, and on the left was a high ridge nearly parallel to the general course of the river, which terminated a little below the breast work, and farther on to the left was still another ridge, running in the same direction and leading to the rear of the Americans. "The ground was

covered with pine interspersed with low shrub-oaks, many of which, for the purpose of concealing their works, had been cut up and stuck in front of them, so as to exhibit the appearance of being still growing. The road after crossing a deep brook at the foot of the hill, turned to the right, and ran nearly parallel to the breast work, so as to expose the whole flank of the army to their fire, if it should advance without discovering their position.

“Parties communicating with each other, were stationed on both hills, so as to fall on the flank and rear of Sullivan as soon as the action should commence.”\*

The position of the enemy was discovered, at about eleven o'clock in the morning, of the 29th of August, by Major Parr who commanded the advance guard. Immediately Gen. Hand formed the light infantry in a wood about four hundred yards from the enemy and waited for the main body of the army. During this time a continual skirmishing was kept up between the rifle corps of Parr and the Indians, who sallied forth from their works in small parties, fired and then retreated as though they wished to be incautiously pursued by the enemy. The woods were made alive by the wild yell of the savage, which resounded from every point, filling the mind with enlarged ideas of the number of their warriors.

Gen. Sullivan formed his line on a piece of ground

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\*Marshall's Washington.

which rose directly opposite the works of the enemy, where they had a full view of the preparation, that had been made to receive them. Judging that the hills on his right were occupied by the enemy, he ordered Gen. Poor to go and take possession of these, and coming in behind, to cut off their retreat.

While Poor was advancing to the execution of his command, and that he might have time to fall in behind the enemy and thus cut off his retreat, Gen. Sullivan ordered the riflemen under Major Parr, to move towards their line and keep up a running fire, adopting the cautious mode of warfare peculiar to their foes, of fighting from behind trees, stumps or logs, each one taking care to expose himself as little as possible, and all watching and shooting whenever they could catch a glimpse of the enemy. Mr. Van Campen took a station with the rest, as had been directed, finding a stump, behind which he threw himself for protection. He had not more than fairly taken his place before he heard the report of a gun, a ball from which came whizzing towards him and was received by his little bulwark. He perceived that it came from a large tree directly opposite.

In a few minutes his antagonist planted another bullet in the stump. Perceiving immediately after this fire, that a few hazel bushes obstructed his view, in case he should return the shot, Van Campen sprang out and with his knife lopped them down, returning in an instant to his former position. Directly after, another ball struck the stump, and putting

his eye a little out from behind it, he caught a glimpse of the Indian attempting to reload his rifle. In ramming down his charge he threw out his hips from the tree so far, that Van Campen supposed a well directed shot might hit him. Then watching for his opportunity, with his finger on the trigger of his gun and his sight directed very close to the bark of the tree, the hips of the Indian again coming in sight, he touched off his rifle, and the ball speeding its unerring course, hit the mark. The Indian bounded into the air with a yell, halloed "*ca-hoo*," and sank down upon the ground. "No more shots came from that tree," says Mr. Van Campen, "and I concluded that I had silenced that battery."

At this time the musketry who had been listening to the brisk firing of the rifle, mingled with the loud shouts and fierce yells of the Indian, became impatient to be led into action. They feared that the riflemen would defeat the enemy, and carry off all the honor. Sullivan, learning this from his aids, and that the men could be held back no longer, gave orders that they should advance. The main body then moved towards the enemy's line, the artillery at the same time opening a fire upon them, so that their works were stormed and carried in a very few minutes at the point of the bayonet.

Meanwhile, Gen. Poor pushed up the mountain, which had indeed been possessed by the enemy, and in his course met with much opposition. Yet he continued to advance, pressing the Indians back at the point of the bayonet, and occasionally opening upon



them a brisk fire, but they retreated from one point to another, delaying his progress by an irregular fire, until he gained the summit of the hill. Perceiving that by this movement, their flank was left uncovered, and that they were in danger of being surrounded, the savages fled with the utmost precipitation, thus leaving the Americans, masters of the field.

The battle had been contested manfully, on the part of the Indians and their allies. Not an effort had been spared which was calculated to give them the triumph of the day, but their adversaries were equally active, and by the superiority of their force, soon gained the ascendancy. In vain did the Indian warrior fly from place to place, that he might stimulate his trusty braves to resist, to the last extremity, the progress of an enemy, sent to lay waste their villages and destroy their corn. In vain does he whisper in their ears the anticipated tale of their burnt wigwams, and of their faithful squaws fruitlessly endeavoring to shrink from the meagre and haggard visage of famine, which would soon stare them in the face, or from the icy embrace of a coming winter, unprotected by their fire-sides and homes. Their utmost endeavor failed; they were driven from their works, and being alarmed at the prospect of their enemy's gaining their rear, and thus shutting off their escape, they raised the retreat-halloo, precipitately abandoned their works, and fled across the river, leaving many of their packs, tomahawks, and scalping knives behind them. The contest had been bloody, and their flight was so precipitate that they left eleven of their dead upon the

field, a circumstance very unusual among the Indians, who use the utmost precaution to conceal their loss from their foes. In their flight they were pursued for about two miles, but it was so rapid that they suffered but little, only eight of their scalps being taken.

The loss of the army was small, being estimated at about thirty.\* The houses of the contiguous village were burned and the corn-fields destroyed. The Americans held their encampment, the night after the battle, upon the field where their victory had been won.

The reader may perhaps be interested with a circumstance in connection with this battle which was learned several years after the restoration of peace between the two contending parties.

Mr. Van Campen was often visited at his residence in Angelica, by the Indians who lived in one of their towns, Caneadea, on the Genesee river, a few miles below the first mentioned place. They had heard of him as being a great Indian warrior, and they had no little curiosity to see him ; and being always well entertained, whenever they paid him a visit, they often came to his house, and consulted with him in reference to their affairs. Among these was one named

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\*Mr. Van Campen thinks that this estimate, which is the one given by Marshall, is too low. That given by Col. Stone, in his *Life of Brant*, is still less in the number of those that were killed being only " five or six, and between forty and fifty wounded." He says the number of killed and wounded could not have been much short of seventy, which was the popular estimation at the time.

Shongo, who was a war-chief of some distinction among them. Calling on Mr. Van Campen one day upon business, they happened after the errand was finished, to be conversing, among other matters upon Sullivan's campaign, and more especially upon the battle below Newtown.\* Van Campen told him that he was there himself, and was with Major Parr's company of riflemen, when they fought from behind trees and bushes. He said that he was behind a stump which was fired into by a large Indian, who stood behind an oak tree directly opposite, that he had the good fortune to get a shot at him, when he was loading his gun, and that, from the manner in which he jumped, he supposed that he had hit him. Shongo, immediately upon hearing the story, said, "*Cowaugh*, I, same Indian." Then turning up his breech-cloth, he showed the scar, and said that he fell to the ground and had to be carried off, being unable to do any thing more, during the remaining part of the action. Mr. Van Campen speaks of him as possessing an uncommonly stout, military figure, nearly or quite six feet high, with a large head, a roman nose, a very full chest, well-proportioned limbs, and a dignified, and rather pleasant cast of countenance. He says of him, "I have seldom, if ever, seen as noble a looking fellow of any nation or tribe of men. During the war of 1813, he visited my house more than once to

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\*The present site of the beautiful and flourishing village of Elmira.

consult with me about the course it would be best for the Indians to pursue. He lived to an advanced age, and has been dead several years."

He must still be recollected by the early settlers of Angelica, and those living below it, on the Genesee river. But the brave fellow is now no more, and the race of which he was a noble representative, has melted away before the sweeping tide of white immigration until now scarcely a trace of them is left behind, to notify the traveler that the ground upon which he is treading was once the home of the poor Indian.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Continuation of Sullivan's campaign.—Advance to Catharine's town—Indian Castle—Kanandaigua—Honeoye—Head of Cornissius Lake—Meditated attack of the Indians—Designs defeated—Fate of the scouting party under Boyd.—Story of the Onondaga brothers—Fate of Boyd—Genesee Valley—Close of the campaign end of the year.*

By the battle of Newtown, an important point was gained in the expedition of Sullivan. The Indians had there brought together their strongest force.—They had chosen their position and prepared themselves for an attack. They had made every disposition which an ardent wish to defend their territory from an invasion could suggest, and hope doubtless led them to entertain the pleasing idea, that they should here strike a serious blow upon this campaign. If they should fail in it, they would certainly have less expectation of making any effectual resistance at any other place. This was indeed the effect of the battle, it discouraged them from coming again to a decisive action, it served to give them an exalted idea of the power of the enemy and it led them to entertain the most fearful apprehensions concerning the fate of their homes. So great a terror was conveyed to their minds, that they continued their flight during the whole night after the battle, until they arrived



early the next day at their village, Catharine's town at the head of Seneca Lake, where the warriors told the women "that they were conquered, and must fly; that they had a great many killed, and vast numbers wounded."\*

From their encampment at Newtown, the Americans sent back to Tioga, whatever of their baggage, artillery and wagons, were not needed in advancing farther. While remaining here Mr. Van Campen was sent with a detachment to destroy a small settlement of the Indian's at the head of Baldwin's Creek. He found it deserted of inhabitants and having burnt the houses, which were about twenty, returned again to the army. On the 21st of August they marched in the direction of Catharine's town, destroying corn-fields and every other Indian possession they found on their way.

The route which they pursued led them through a wild, uncultivated region, over places that had heretofore been traveled only by the wandering savage and they found that their advance was most fatiguing and difficult. Had the Indians and Tories delayed their retreat, they might have had an opportunity of retrieving somewhat, the loss which they sustained at the battle of Newtown; for, the course of the army leading along through narrows and dangerous defiles, over streams, which they were compelled to wade,

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\*Sullivan's Official Account, as quoted in a note of Stone's Life of Brant.

and between hills which rose on either side of them, they might have been met at any, or at all of these points, by the shadowy forms of their cunning foes, and been most severely harassed. At one place, especially, they would have met with a great loss, had the enemy been on the alert, to watch every advantage which came in their favor.

They were obliged to go through a wide spread hemlock swamp, which lay in their course and which they found it very difficult to pass. Their way being obstructed by fallen trees and brush-wood, they had a tangled path to thread, and their pack horses miring at every short distance, they were continually beset with trouble, so that had an enemy appeared to distress them farther, and cap the climax of their toils, they would have suffered a great loss from the engagement. But the Indian did not make his appearance, he was not aware of the havoc he might have made upon the American forces, as they were struggling through that dismal swamp, and in the hour, too, of night.

It was late in the afternoon when the army came up to the swamp, and so slow was its progress through, that those who entered it first did not reach the opposite side, but were obliged to pass the night in that place of gloom.\*

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\*Col. Stone, in speaking of this part of Sullivan's campaign, says, "The night came on exceedingly dark, and the sufferings of the troops were great. General Sullivan, was advised not to enter the swamp until the next day, but he rejected the council, and obstinate-

This swamp was situated on the high land which forms a dividing line between the waters flowing into the Chemung on the one side, and the Seneca Lake, on the other. Two streams have their sources here, flowing in directions contrary to each other as just mentioned, and the army having made its way through this morass, followed in the course of that emptying into the head of Seneca Lake, until it came to the next Indian village called Catharine's town, the residence of the celebrated Catharine Montour. It was beautifully situated, numbering about thirty houses and was surrounded by corn-fields and orchards. They took possession unopposed, for the Indians panic-stricken, had fled from their homes, leaving them to be laid in ruins by their foes. As the orders of the Commander-in-chief had been peremptory in respect to the destruction of these, not a single vestige was left in the track of the army, upon which the Indian warriors could find subsistence. Every settlement in the region of their course was burnt, every corn-field leveled with the ground, and the stately fruit trees cut down with the axe.

From Catharine's town, the army proceeded on its

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ly pushed forward. So fatigued, however, was the army, that Gen. Clinton, whose division brought up the rear, was obliged to pass the night in the swamp, without sack or baggage." Mr. Van Campen states that those who entered the swamp first, did not get through that night, and that the rear of the army, where he was himself marching encamped before going in, and marched through it on the next day. His memory so generally agrees with the other facts that have been recorded of this campaign, that in this instance we have followed in the text, the statements he has made according to the best of his recollection.

march down along the eastern border of the Seneca Lake, burning Kendaia, a considerable town containing about twenty houses, on their way, and crossing its outlet on the 7th of September, advanced to Kanadaseagea, the capital of the Seneca nation. Here Sullivan expected that the enemy had fortified themselves for another engagement, and approaching this town he separated his army into three divisions, intending to come upon it from three points, and take it by surprise. But though the Indians had been advised by their leaders to make another stand against the enemy at this place, they would not be persuaded, maintaining that it was entirely useless to contend with such a powerful army. Their capital, therefore, popularly known at the time, as the Seneca Castle, and since then as the Indian Castle, was found deserted, not a man appearing to offer the most feeble resistance to the invading force.

This was one of the largest towns which General Sullivan found in his march through the Indian country. Being the seat of government, the chief men of the Seneca nation here had their residence. Their dwellings though rudely constructed were not uncomfortable, and their ground was laid out with gardens, or occupied with large fields of corn. Some of their edifices were quite stately, and the abundance of their fruit trees, together with a luxuriant growth of various kinds of vegetables, presented an appearance which was rather imposing for a nation called savage. But here, alas, a ruthless hand was laid upon every thing, which had been the object of Indian taste or

pride, and all that could mark the ancient glory of their nation was reduced to ashes, or laid in ruins.

Yet tradition still hallows the place where the council fire burned, and where the distinguished men of a noble race met to discuss the great interests of their people. A few old apple trees, that have since grown from the stumps that were then left, after the trees were cut down, have appeared, to mark the spot which still bears the name of the Old Indian Castle, and long may these remain, as the sad relics of all that can now be seen of the dwelling-place of the proud Senceas.\*

The army having accomplished the destruction of Kanadesceagea, and one or two other towns and settlements near, moved forward upon Kanandaigua, and arrived there in two days. This, also, was a place of comparative elegance, "the houses being mostly framed, and in general, large,"† but these, which were twenty-three in number, were also destroyed, as well as the large and beautiful corn-fields which were found, swelling from the bosom of the delightful country around them. From this place they proceeded to the small town of Honeoye, being about half as large as Kanandaigua. This also, with its corn-fields, was destroyed, and at this point a strong garrison, with the heavy stores of the army, was left while it

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\*These trees are about one mile from Geneva, on what is called the north road leading to Canandaigua.

†Sullivan's Report, as quoted by Stone. We shall have occasion to speak of Indian Architecture in the present chapter.



should advance upon the still larger town of Genesee.

This was the great capital of the western tribes of the confederacy of the Six Nations. It numbered one hundred and twenty-eight houses, "the most of them large and *elegantly* built,"\* and being situated in a most fertile region and one widely cultivated, their possessions here, were more dear to them than any which had hitherto fallen into the hands of the army.

The Indians, having been apprised of the design of Sullivan to visit them here also, began to meditate upon some means of resistance. They were assured of the destruction of all their towns, if the enemy should be allowed to advance any farther unmolested, and concluding that it would add but little to their extremity in case of a defeat, they determined to way-lay the path of the invading army and strike another blow in defense of their homes. Sullivan's advance from Honeoye was, therefore, most eagerly watched. The riflemen marching in front and on the flank, could often see the Indian retreating from a high piece of ground, (where he had been watching their movements,) and fleeing away like a deer that is started up in the track of the hunter. They were thus led to anticipate some design on the part of their foes and proceeded with caution.

The army kept up its march, however, without meeting with an attack,† and soon arrived at the

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\*Sullivan's Report.

†Mr. Van Campen's account of this part of the campaign differs somewhat from that given by Stone in his life of Brant, and also from

head of Conmissius Lake, where it was obliged to make a halt, while some means were devised by which to cross its inlet. This formed an extensive and marshy piece of ground, and they anticipated a delay of some days, while constructing a rude bridge by which the main body could get across. The place seemed favorable for an attack, and they expected nothing short of a severe encounter with the Indians. A detachment of the army under Gen. Hand, gained the opposite side to protect their works, while a small party under Lieutenant Boyd, was sent to watch the movements of the enemy, and reconnoiter the next town, Genesee, which being a place of much importance, and their last strong hold it was supposed they would endeavor to defend. Boyd with his company of twenty-six men, and two faithful Oneidas,

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the one given in Mrs. Jemison's Narrative, which has generally been received as good authority upon the subjects of which it treats. Col. Stone's history runs thus:—"Having made their preparations the warriors took the field again—selecting for their battle-ground a position between Honeoye Creek and Conmissius Lake. Placing themselves in ambush, they awaited the approach of Sullivan's forces, they arose however upon the advance-guard of the Americans, and after a brisk skirmish, the latter fell back upon the main body—of which the Indians did not wait the arrival. The only fruit of this attack, on behalf of the Indians, was the capture of two Indian prisoners of the Oneida tribe." Mr. Van Campen says that after the battle of Newtown there was no attack made upon the army, or any skirmishing of any kind, during the remainder of the campaign, other than that which occurred with the party led by Boyd. In this he is supported by Marshall, who, in speaking of the Indians says:—"As Sullivan advanced they continued to retreat before him without harassing his main body, or even skirmishing with his detachments, except in a *single instance*. Lieutenant Boyd who had been detached to a considerable distance in order to reconnoiter the Genesee town, fell into an ambuscade laid for him by a large body of the enemy, and fell with fourteen men and an Oneida chief."

as guides, started on his undertaking late in the afternoon, and having performed his duty, during the hours of night, with all the secrecy and dispatch it was possible to observe, was advancing on his return to the main division and while pursuing his route in the morning, discovered one or two Indians running at a distance from him. He was disposed to pursue them, but was advised by his trusty Oneidas, not to follow, for said they, "These are only wishing to draw us after them, until they bring us into a large party, that are lying in some place of concealment, where we shall all be cut off." These Oneidas well understood the designs of the enemy ; they had themselves been trained to Indian artifice and they were led to suspect the apparent timidity of those that had started up before them in flight.

Their suspicions were not groundless ; the Indians by some means had learned that this detachment had gone out under Boyd, and being determined to cut off its return to the army, they had secreted themselves on the course which they supposed he would pursue, and were eagerly watching for his appearance.

Yet, Boyd who was anxious to come up with them, thinking that he could with safety pursue their track a short distance, kept on, until one of them was killed and his scalp taken. He was shot by the famous Murphy who ran on ahead of his party and by his fleetness, came so near his victim that there was no opportunity for escape.

Timothy Murphy was a Pennsylvanian, by birth, rather dark of complexion, possessed a piercing black

eye, and his features though well formed, were marked by hardihood from the exposures of the camp. He was not far from five feet, nine inches in height, and his limbs, all of them finely turned, betrayed the presence of great muscular strength and activity. He was not a Virginian, as has been represented, was well known to Mr. Van Campen, who says that he was brought up on his, (Van Campen's,) father's farm, on the Delaware, and that he was well acquainted with the family, which lived near, until his father removed into the vicinity of Northumberland. He was one of the brave spirits of the revolution, and his name has been widely circulated, as being one of the bold adventurers of the border warfare. Many stories have been related of Murphy by which it appears he was accustomed to the greatest daring. Having always had the good fortune to escape whenever pursued by the enemy, he never had the least fear of falling into their hands. He was so fleet of foot that he could outrun the swiftest Indian, and from the circumstance of his possessing a double-barreled rifle, he was regarded by them as an object of terror. He never missed his aim, and the fact of his shooting twice in succession, was well known among the dusky warriors. Frequently making war on his own account, he was often brought into the midst of danger; yet he trusted in every instance to his faithful gun, and a nimble foot to carry him beyond its reach. If the Indian started in pursuit, he would turn, and with his rifle bring the foremost to the ground. Should they still continue to press his retreat, he would turn

and take another from the track. The second fire would invariably put an end to all further pursuit, for the savages, becoming alarmed at his firing without stopping to re-load, concluded that he possessed a sort of wizard power, by which he could keep on shooting as long as he pleased, without being at the trouble to replace any load after a discharge. But finally learning that he could fire only twice before re-loading, they were always sure to wait until they heard the second report, before attempting to come near him with any kind of assurance. Upon one occasion when he was closely chased in his flight by several Indians, he ran until he distanced all but two ; as these followed hard on, he turned and shot down the leading one, and catching up the rifle of the expiring warrior, shot down the other. Hearing the two reports, the others came rushing up, but Murphy with his remaining charge shot down one of these, and the rest immediately turned about, saying that it was of no use to follow after a man, *who could keep on firing all day.*

On the present occasion, Murphy, as was his custom, scalped the Indian whom he had killed, and with his usual coolness, took from him his leggins, which were of good cloth, and of a scarlet color and appropriated them to his own use.

Boyd, as the Oneidas had feared, advanced too far. He had no thought of the enemy, until he was in their very midst, and beheld them rising every where around him. It was a trying moment. Not less than five hundred warriors had encompassed him and his party ; —what could he do but surrender to the enemy ! Little



hope was presented for an escape, yet he resolved upon a trial.

Perceiving it to be his only alternative, he selected a point of the enemy's line and determined to force a passage. It was a bold measure; yet he resolved upon its accomplishment, and directing his fire upon the line of Indian warriors he saw them fall before the deadly aim of his men and then rushed into the breach, but was repulsed, yet, what was very singular, without the loss of a single man. He made another attempt but was again defeated with loss. But never intimidated, his trusty braves prepared themselves for still another trial and in this desperate struggle most of his party fell; yet three of them made their escape, among whom, was the ever fortunate Murphy. He was pursued and finding that his leggins were so small as to impede his flight, he stopped for a moment, until he could cut them open; this done, he continued his race and made good his escape.\* Boyd and one of his soldiers named Parker, together with the two Oneidas, were taken prisoners. Boyd, upon finding himself in the hands of the enemy, solicited an interview with their leader Brant, determining as a last resort to try the honor and fidelity of the Indian chief. This celebrated warrior, Thayendanagea, being near by, immediately presented himself, when Lieut. Boyd by a signal which was understood only by those who were initia-

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\*Mr. Van Campen from him the history of the whole affair immediately after his return.

ted, made himself known as a free-mason, thus claiming the sympathy and protection of a distressed brother. The appeal was recognized by Brant and called forth the strongest assurances of the protection of his life. But the fate of one of the Oneidas was of a different character. His story is fraught with deep interest.

He had early enlisted in the American cause and had already been of great service to the army. He was active bold and persevering, and was much beloved by the officers under whom he was placed. In this expedition he acted as a guide for General Sullivan. He was faithful to his trust, leading the troops with the utmost fidelity, through the country inhabited by his red brethren. But now he was a prisoner in their hands, and it appears from what followed his capture, that at the time when he entered the American service, he had an elder brother, who was about joining himself to the fortunes of the British and who besought him, with all the earnestness of a brother's love, to go with him and with his people into the service of the crown. But his entreaties were unavailing, the younger Indian gave to his choice, and they parted, each to pursue his own course in the uncertain paths of war. They had not met since the time when they had left each other by mutual consent, and the young Oneida was now brought, into the presence of his brother, a captive. They mutually recognized each other, and as the eyes of the elder, were riveted with earnest gaze upon the mild features of the younger, they suddenly glowed with

unwonted fire, and it was easy to perceive from his every look, that his soul was kindled with revenge.— He approached him haughtily, and with a proud and dignified air, spoke as follows :—

“BROTHER ! you have merited death ! The hatchet, or the war-club shall finish your career ! When I begged of you to follow me in the fortunes of war you were deaf to my cries ; you spurned my entreaties !

“BROTHER ! you have merited death, and shall have your deserts ! When the rebels raised their hatchets to fight their good master, you sharpened your knife, you brightened your rifle, and led on our foes to the fields of our fathers !

“BROTHER ! You have merited death, and shall die by our hands ! When those rebels had driven us from the fields of our fathers to seek out new houses, it was you who could dare to step forth as their pilot, and conduct them even to the doors of our wigwams, to butcher our children and put us to death ! No crime can be greater ! But though you have merited death, and shall die on this spot, my hands shall not be stained with the blood of a brother ! *Who will strike ?*”

There was a moment's pause, and then the bright hatchet of Little Beard, an Indian Sachem, gleamed through the air like a flash of lightning, and the young Oncida chief, lay dead at his feet.\* The

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\*This instance showing the high sense of honor, which existed among the red men of America, has often been contrasted with one, related by Chapman of the pale faced man, which occurred in

other captive, who was also an Oneida chief, was then assured by Little Beard, that he need not apprehend any fears for his life, that their warfare was against the whites, and that in due time he should be restored to his liberty. Yet through a lack of sufficient confidence in the good faith of the chief, or

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the battle of Wyoming in '78, and it must be confessed that the Indian character appears well in the comparison, "A considerable number of the inhabitants of the different settlements on the Susquehanna, who from their attachment to the British cause, were denominated *tories*, joined the British and savage troops previous to the battle, and exhibited instances of the most savage barbarity in the manner in which they carried on the war against their former neighbors and friends. One instance may serve to shew the desperate feelings which those times produced. A short distance below the battle ground there is a large island in the river called 'Monocknock Island.' Several of the settlers, while the battle and pursuit continued, succeeded in swimming to this island, where they concealed themselves among the logs and brushwood upon it. Their arms had been thrown away in their flight, previous to their entering the river, so that they were in a manner defenceless. Two of them in particular were concealed near and in sight of each other. While in this situation they observed several of the enemy who had pursued and fired at them while they were swimming the river, preparing to follow them to the island with the guns. On reaching the island they immediately wiped their guns and loaded them. One of them with his loaded gun soon passed close by one of these men who lay concealed from his view, and was immediately recognized by him to be the brother of his companion who was concealed near him, but who, being a tory, had joined the enemy. He passed slowly along, carefully examining every covert, and directly perceived his brother in his place of concealment. He suddenly stopped and said, "so it is you, is it?" His brother finding that he was discovered, immediately came forward a few steps, and falling on his knees, begged him to spare his life, promising to live with him and serve him, and even to be his slave as long as he lived, if he would only spare his life. "*All this is mighty good,*" replied the savage hearted brother of the supplicating man, "*but you 're a d——d rebel;*" and deliberately presenting his rifle, shot him dead upon the spot. The other settler made his escape from the island, and having related this fact, the tory brother thought it prudent to accompany the British troops on their return to Canada."

An instance of fratricide, so deliberate and cruel, cannot perhaps be found in the annals of Indian history.

from some other cause, he watched his opportunity for escape and effected his purpose.

From the field of battle Lieut. Boyd and his fellow captive were conducted to Little Beardstown, where they came in company with Colonel Butler and a detachment of the rangers. The honor of Brant was pledged for his safety, and while under his supervision there can be no doubt but that he would have most religiously observed his faith; but the active habits of this warrior keeping him continually in motion, he left the camp upon duty and placed Boyd under the care of Butler. No sooner had Brant left, than Butler began to question the prisoner about the situation, numbers and intentions of General Sullivan and his troops. Boyd unwilling to betray the cause of his country even by a single word, declined giving any answer that would implicate his friends. Butler therefore threatened to deliver him up to the tender mercies of the Indians; yet Boyd, relying with the utmost confidence upon the kind assurances of the Mohawk chief, persisted in refusing; and his cruel inquisitor, true to his bloody threat, delivered him over to Little Beard and his clan, the most ferocious of the Seneca tribe. The noble fellow met his fate with a truly independent spirit, facing his tormentors with a look proudly indignant, while they proceeded to execute their horrid designs, with a refinement of cruelty, which has no parallel in any of the accounts given of the war. They first stripped him of his clothing, then tied him to a sapling, where the Indians gratified their fiendish tastes, by throwing the tomahawk at him so as to strike a little



above his head, and by brandishing their scalping knives around him in a most frightful manner, accompanying their motions with terrific yells and dancing around with frantic demonstrations of joy.

They next proceeded to pull out his nails; this done, they cut off his nose and plucked out one of his eyes. In addition to these enormities they cut out his tongue and stabbed him in several places. But this was not the end of their more than savage cruelty. As if to tear him from life by the most excruciating pains, they made a small incision in his abdomen, from which they took one of his intestines, and fastened it to the tree. The suffering man was then unbound and with brute force compelled to move around the tree, until his entrails were literally drawn from his body and wound about its trunk. They ended his torments by severing his head from his body. A tale like this is too agonizing to be read, much less to exist as the memorial of a transaction which was indeed a reality.

Lieut. Boyd was the youngest of three brothers, John, William and Thomas, who were all, at the time of the breaking out of the war, residing with their widowed mother at Northumberland, Pennsylvania. It was when the spirit of the revolution began to animate the bosoms of the Americans, and while the frontier settlers were writhing under the keen blows inflicted by the cruel savage, that Mrs. Boyd like a truly Spartan mother, devoted her sons to the cause of their country. It was a solemn and noble resolve and was marked by the deep piety of her heart. Calling them before her she expressed the deep interest

she felt in the success of those who were engaged in the struggle for liberty, and with what pleasure she had beheld the sacrifices which others were willing to make in its behalf; at the same time stating that she was willing to pledge *her* all, in the sacred cause of freedom. Her sons were dearer to her than any thing of earth, and these she was ready to lay upon the altar of her country's rights. She did so with this solemn injunction, "that they should never disgrace their swords, *with the least spot or stain of cowardice.*"

They all with an eager spirit, entered the army. William fell in the battle of Brandywine, John was a prisoner to the Indians, at one time, with Mr. Van Campen, and the sad fate of Thomas the younger, which was brought upon him by refusing to dishonor the cause in which he had enlisted, even by a single word, shows but too well how he regarded the solemn charge of his noble-hearted mother. How afflicting to her must have been the melancholy intelligence, that was brought back concerning her darling boy! He was a youth of promise; intelligent, sprightly and brave, the path of honor was before him, and he bid fair to press his way forward, until he should be permitted to bask in the clear light of a well-earned fame.

He was about six feet high, finely proportioned, rather light of complexion, and possessed an active, vigorous frame. The severity with which he was made to part with life, has enlisted for him an universal sympathy, and his name will ever be remembered as one of the gallant heroes of the revolution.

As soon as the detachment under Gen. Hand, heard

the news of the skirmishing of Boyd's party, it moved rapidly forward, ascended the hill which arose at no great distance from the head of the lake, and in their route fell in with the packs and baggage of the Indians. They concluded from the situation of the place, that the enemy had selected this point, with the design of making an attack, since it afforded them a sort of central position, whence they could send their parties to harass their foes, and to which they might retreat whenever they were driven back. Not stopping here Gen. Hand pressed on to the scene of action, and soon came to where the enemy had been busy in removing their dead; but the Indians not awaiting his approach precipitately fled, leaving one of their number with the dead riflemen.

They then attended to the burial of those who had fallen in the engagement, and waited until they were joined the next day by the main army, when the whole marched together as far as Fall Brook, where they encamped for the night.\* Gen. Sullivan learning here, that the enemy had fled from all their towns, made a disposition of his army for the destruction of their villages and plantations. Generals Poor and Maxwell

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\* There has been a popular impression in this part of the country, that during the campaign of Sullivan a party of Indians were driven off the precipice at Fall Brook, a mile south of Geneseo. This report is untrue; no Indians were then driven off and it would be altogether absurd to suppose that they could be, since they were themselves perfectly familiar with this dangerous place and could easily avoid it, while their foes, being directed by guides, would act a very awkward part in endeavoring to drive the enemy, to a point of which they were almost entirely ignorant.

were sent to destroy those situated below, while Generals Hand and Clinton were sent to destroy those that were above the place of their encampment.

On the next day the work of destruction commenced, each division of the army advancing to its appointed field of operation. Maj. Parr of Gen. Clinton's brigade crossed the Genesee river to burn Little Beardstown, and here found the lifeless bodies of Boyd and Parker. He immediately proceeded to give them the honor of a decent burial, selecting a spot which, from its situation might be easily remembered by those who were their companions in arms. It was on the bank of Little Beard's Creek where a little stream forms a junction with it, in a break of the bank under a clump of wild plum trees.

This spot has been kept in mind by tradition and there is now an appropriate mound which marks the place, that may be seen by every traveler through the region visited by this campaign, on the road leading between Genesee and Moscow.

From the sad offices of the grave, the troops turned again to the work of destruction, and in a few days the beautiful country of the Genesee, was one wide scene of desolation. The territory which had been thus laid waste, was the finest that had been visited by the army. Upon first casting their eyes over it, the soldiers beheld it with astonishment and joy. It presented, then, the same delightful and open view, which it spreads out to the beholder, now. The mind and the heart were feasted, as they ran out in vision over a plain which stretched far into the distance,

meeting here and there a beautiful grove and on every side corn-fields, that were bowing to the breeze, and whose broad and ample bosom gave the most enlarged ideas of plenty.

The Indians had here come together in great numbers, and here they had the largest village which Sullivan had met with on his route, and in speaking of it, uses the same exaggerated style, which he employs in describing the other villages he passed through. "The town of Genesee contained one hundred and twenty-eight houses, mostly large and *very elegant*. It was beautifully situated, almost encircled with a clear flatt, extending a number of miles ; over which extensive fields of corn were waving, together with every kind of vegetable that could be conceived."\*

From the glowing colors in which General Sullivan describes the country which he passed through, Col. Stone has doubtless been led into an error in speaking of the high state of civilization to which the Senecas and Cayugas had arrived. He says, "it is apprehended that but few of the present generation are aware of the advances which the Indians in the wide and beautiful country of the Cayugas and Senecas, had made in the march of civilization. They had several towns, and many large villages, laid out with a considerable degree of regularity. They had *framed houses*, some of them well finished, having chimneys, and painted." Mr. Van Campen says that the story

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\*Sullivan's Report, as quoted by Stone.



of their framed houses is all a *fudge*: at least in that part of their country passed through by the army of Sullivan. His own memory may be trusted, upon this point, for, if the houses had been upon the magnificent scale which has been represented, the fact could not have altogether escaped his recollection.— And the reasons which he gives in support of his position tend very much to confirm his opinion.

He says that “in a country where there are framed houses, there is generally found such a thing as a saw-mill. But there were no saw-mills on our route. Yet framed houses are sometimes found in a country where there are no saw-mills. Yes: but it is in a region to which lumber can easily be transported, and in one where the inhabitants have advanced considerably in the arts of commerce. At the time of the war there were very few saw-mills in the whole country; there was but one to my knowledge above Wilksbarre, in the whole region watered by the Susquehanna; and as for the houses being painted, it couldn’t have been with any thing but *mud*: many of them we found daubed over with this.” Indeed, it would be contrary to the native indolence and slovenly habits of the Indian, to suppose that he would go to any great labor, or pains in rearing for himself a dwelling, other than that which could be formed of materials near at hand, and then too, without any surprising exercise of skill. He delighted more, in his hunting grounds and the chase, than in any great display about his place of living. Mr. Van Campen says that their houses were generally built by fixing large posts into the ground, at a convenient

distance from each other, between which, poles were woven. This formed the covering of the sides ; the roof was made by laying bark upon poles, which were properly placed as a support. To afford greater warmth, the sides were plastered with mud. The houses that were found on the route were all of this description, and if they were framed, this is the manner in which it was done, and the painting was doubtless such as has been described.

It cannot be denied, however, that the Indians had advanced far, in the arts of peace. Their wide and flourishing corn-fields, and their fine orchards of the apple and peach tree, were no fiction ; they presented the evidences of a cultivation, which was extraordinary, when we consider how naturally averse the American Indians were, to any thing like patient industry. Yet the labor which was bestowed upon these, was, doubtless, performed by the faithful squaw, since she was doomed by her lord to bear the principal drudgeries of life.

After laying waste the beautiful country of the Genesee, Sullivan pursued the Indians no further. It doubtless belonged to the original design of this campaign, that the army should proceed as far as Niagara and there strike a decisive blow upon the Indians and British. But from some cause, which has been left unexplained, the expedition was stopped here, and the Indians were allowed to seek their last resort of strength, without being molested in the least. Niagara remained, the head quarters of the British rangers, blood-thirsty Tories, and cruel Indians, whence parties

could be still sent out on the work of devastation and death, among the uncertain homes of the frontier settlers. But Sullivan, as though he had accomplished the end of his campaign, relinquished all further enterprise and started home, marching with his army in very much the same route which they had come.

Still, if the destruction of property was the only end of this undertaking, it must be confessed that the work of desolation was well completed. The country which, a month previous, appeared like a beautiful and flourishing garden, now presented to the eye little else than a dreary waste, or a smoking heap of ruins. A better description of the scene cannot perhaps be given than that from the pen of Stone. "The axe and the torch soon transformed the whole of that beautiful region from the character of a garden to a scene of drear and sickening desolation. Forty Indian towns, the largest containing one hundred and twenty-eight houses, were destroyed, corn, gathered and ungathered to the amount of one hundred and sixty thousand bushels, shared the same fate ; their fruit trees were cut down ; and the Indians were hunted like wild beasts, till neither house, nor fruit tree, nor field of corn, nor inhabitant remained in the whole country. The gardens were enriched with great quantities of useful vegetables of different kinds. The size of the corn-fields, as well as the high degree of cultivation in which they were kept, excited wonder ; and the ears of corn were so remarkably large, that many of them measured twenty-two inches in length.

"So numerous were the fruit trees, that in one

orchard they cut down fifteen hundred of them."

Several towns were destroyed on their way back, by detachments sent into the region of Cayuga Lake, the main body of the army pursuing the most direct route to Tioga, at which place it arrived on the 30th of September. In a few days it resumed its return march, down the Susquehanna, and passing through Wyoming, arrived at Easton, on the 15th of October. It had traversed a large extent of territory, the distance thence to the Genesee Castle being not less than two hundred and eighty miles. Besides the victory at Newtown the army achieved but little, yet it had marched over a broad extent of country, and sorely afflicted the Indian in the destruction of his towns, and in the desolation of his favorite retreats ; but as for himself, he had not been crippled, nor his ferocious spirit subdued. If any thing his spirit was more restive ; like a galled tiger, he had gone back to his lair, and was only waiting for an opportunity to burst from his retreat, and seize upon his foe with a more deadly grasp.

The part performed by Mr. Van Campen in the expedition above Tioga, was only that of a volunteer. Belonging to the boat department, having to superintend, as we have seen, the military stores, his services ended when he reached that place ; yet he could not bear the inactivity of awaiting the return of the army, he chose rather to throw himself in with the fortunes of the campaign, and endure its fatigues and dangers, than remain at a distance from the field of strife.

Upon his return he was taken sick with a fever, and

was removed to the Fort, which he had built early in the preceding year upon the waters of Fishing Creek. Here his father resided, his house having been burned by the Indians at the time of their making their attack upon the settlement, as has already been described in the spring of '78. Van Campen recovered his health during the winter and was prepared for entering upon the duties of the coming year.



## CHAPTER VIII.

*Situation of the Pennsylvania frontier in the spring of 1780. Hostilities commence—Capture of Bennett and Hammond—They destroy their party and escape—Capture of Van Campen and others—They effect their escape—Van Campen enters the continental service—A little incident—Narrow escape.*

MUCH reliance had been placed upon the campaign of Sullivan, by the inhabitants of the frontier settlements, to afford them protection against any further molestation from the Indians. These had been driven back so far from their homes, and had suffered such a complete overthrow that it was fondly anticipated they would not very soon venture to come again into the vicinity of the frontier. It was supposed by some that they had been completely vanquished, and that now it was perfectly safe for the farmer to return to his employments and, as soon as the spring should open, commence the labor of cultivating his soil.

But the Indian though he had been driven back had not been conquered. On the contrary, he had been wrought up to a spirit of desperation, by the ravages that were made upon his territory in the destruction of his home, and of the altars that had been laid by the hands of his fathers.

Many of the settlers, especially those in the vicinity of Wyoming, had been so much interrupted during the

preceding years, in their labors on the farm, and the products of many had been so completely destroyed by the Indians and British rangers, that it was deemed necessary for the husbandman to engage in an early cultivation of the soil.

While the inhabitants, therefore, were preparing to enter upon the peaceful occupation of their farms, their unsubdued foes were meditating designs of mischief, and ere long were prepared to plant themselves, like so many sentinels, along the outskirts of the settlements, and watch for the favorable opportunity to spring from their hiding places, upon the unarmed laborer, and make him the victim of the tomahawk, or hurry him away as a captive, whose fate was to be entirely at the beck of savage caprice. Instances of plunder, burning, murder and capture began early to circulate along the frontier, so that it was soon apparent, that the enemy was abroad and was intent upon doing all the mischief within his power. But in every instance the Indian did not escape unpunished for his deeds of cruelty.

Among the inhabitants of the territory open to his incursions, there were those who possessed a most resolute, daring spirit, who were not to be intimidated by the enemy, and who were not slow to extricate themselves from danger. One of these, as we have had occasion already to mention, was Lebbeus Hammond; and another, almost equally fearless, named Bennett, was a brave companion with him, and both of them inhabitants of the beautiful valley of Wyoming.

This place had been protected after the massacre

in '78 by troops of the regular army stationed at Wilksbarre Fort. Some of the inhabitants that remained, removed from this fort early in the succeeding year to the upper part of the valley, and fortified themselves by building a garrison of twenty-eight houses standing in a semi-circle, the base of which was formed by the river, each one being placed three feet within the other, so that the rear of every successive house could be defended, from the preceding one. In the centre of the semi-circle a large gate led into the open space enclosed by the buildings. The two that were next the river were constructed so as to guard against an attack from Indians, creeping along the bank, all had a communication from one to the other in the upper story, and along on the top was a promenade for sentries.

Here Bennett and Hammond, with nearly thirty of the settlers, lived during the summer of '79, and cultivated about one hundred acres of corn, which gave an ample supply of food for the winter. Their fortification appeared quite formidable at a distance, so much so that a large party of Indians, which lay upon the opposite mountain previous to the campaign of Sullivan, did not venture to make an attack upon it as they had designed. It was guarded by three sentinels, two of which promenaded the tops of the houses, and one the bank of the river. Having spent the summer and winter here without an attack, Bennett resolved in the spring, to go and cultivate his own farm which lay a few miles above. His friends remonstrated with him upon the danger of going off

alone, so far from the garrison, saying that "he would certainly be killed or taken prisoner by the Indians." Yet he persisted in his determination, affirming that there was no danger,—that the Indians would not certainly venture this year to attack the settlements, and if they did, he relied much upon a famous hunting dog of his, to warn him of the approach of the enemy. This dog, he said, could smell an Indian before he was within rifle shot, and would give the alarm. Trusting, therefore, to the faithfulness of his sagacious old pet, he took with him his son, who was quite a boy, and went up to his farm and commenced ploughing. He placed two rifles at each side of the field where his furrows ended, believing that in case of an attack, his son and himself could reach one or the other two rifles.

Thus they worked for the space of two days without any interruption, returning at night to the garrison. They had been watched, however, by a company of savages, numbering seven, who had inspected their every movement. On the third day they were accompanied on their way back to their work, by Mr. Lebbeus Hammond, who went in pursuit of a pair of horses, which had strayed away from their enclosure. He was also warned of the danger of going out alone in the woods, yet he apprehended nothing of the kind, and would allow no company to go with him as a guard. He expected to find his horses in the direction of Bennett's farm and they proceeded on together, each shouldering his rifle. Not meeting with the animals of which he was in pursuit, before reaching

the farm, Bennett volunteered, with his boy and dog, to go with him further ; but he refused, saying that there was no danger, and that he would soon return. He then proceeded up the river alone, until he found his horses, and having caught them, mounted one and was returning, leading the other. As he came in sight of Bennett's farm, his eyes were fixed in that direction, earnestly watching him and his boy as they were at work in the field. He had no thought of the savage, nor the most distant idea that he was in the vicinity of danger. Yet while he was looking towards his friends, and eagerly expecting another sight, when they should pass the point, which at that moment obscured the view, his path was immediately beset with Indians, who seized his horses before he was aware, and who afforded him no opportunity for escape. Seeing himself so completely in their power he thought it best to offer no resistance, but to make the best of the circumstances into which he was thrown. They made him dismount, then bound him and laid him on the ground. While he was lying here he could see some of them creep along behind the fence, which obscured them from Bennett, and there could see the latter pass and re-pass, where the view was open, while the Indians were watching for the most favorable moment to take him. He wondered where Bennett's dog could be, all this while, and was expecting every moment that he would sound the alarm. But the dog, which had been deoted upon so much, proved himself a coward ; Hammond caught a glimpse of him running away, with his tail down,



and at full speed. The Indians watched Bennett and his boy, as they ploughed, round after round, unconscious that the keen eye of their foes was upon them. But finally, as they were just beginning to cross the field with another furrow, these slipped over the fence, and came behind them with noiseless tread, and placed a hand upon the shoulder of himself and boy. Seeing that there was no opportunity for escape, he also gave up without making any resistance, and they were about to take him away, leaving his team standing in the harness. Bennett, with characteristic bravery, swore he would not go with them, until they would allow him to unhitch his horses, so that they might be able to get their living while he was gone. The Indians generously performed this service with their knives, and then led him on till they came to where they had left Hammond. The two recognized each other with a smile, and were not a little gratified that their fortunes were thus thrown together. Unloosing Hammond, they began to march with their prisoners, up the river leading his horses only a short distance with them, for they appeared to be concerned lest their trail would lead to detection. They therefore slipped off the halters from them and let them go.

We have before seen that Hammond possessed a bold and courageous spirit; he was gifted with another trait of character, which is not unfrequently found to be the handmaid of bravery. As he walked along by his Indian guard, he soon forgot his troubles and broke forth into an airy whistle, or made the woods echo to the notes of some playful song. He threw off his

cares, with as much ease as though they had been no burden, and tripped along with so light and merry a heart, as to impart to the savages themselves, a high gratification, and make them more at ease concerning their prisoner.

Bennett, either from the circumstance of his having a family or from some other cause, could not be so light of heart. His boy was with him, and the sympathies of a father were doubtless laden with a deep anxiety, for the welfare of his child, and the savages regarded him with a more cautious eye. Yet as they advanced the prisoners had an opportunity to pass a word or two, sufficient to become acquainted with each other's designs. Hammond informed Bennett that he did not intend to stay long with his company, and when they came to a place which favored his design, he spoke and said, "Now, here Bennett, is a spot where I can get away from the Indians as easy as to turn my hand over. I can start and run and the best of them can't catch me. There are trees in the way and I will risk their bringing me down with the rifle. I can run home like a bird."—Bennett plead with him not to go—that he should have some sympathy with him and his boy—that, should he leave them, they would certainly be tomahawked. He begged of him, for the sake of his boy, to remain. He said that if they went along with them peaceably, their lives would in all probability be spared, and that a journey through to Niagara, would not be a very great undertaking, and that they would be likely to get back by winter. Hammond told him

that he would not go through with them to Niagara, but that, if they would help him kill the party which had taken them, he would go further. To this they assented and determined to embrace the first opportunity to execute their horrid designs ; if possible, during the coming night. They traveled on until darkness overtook them, Hammond cheering their way with a merry whistle or with a song. At night they encamped near a running brook, and after having brought together a sufficient supply of wood and taken supper, they made preparations for the night.—The prisoners were tied and made to lie down, each one between two Indians. Thus situated they were presented with little hope of making their escape, yet they had a full opportunity of reflecting upon the curious fortunes of the day, and of imagining the depth of anxiety which must be felt by those whom they had left at home. We will leave this party here, to describe the progress of another, of the same character, and of similar history.

There was little apprehension, as we have stated in the commencement of the present chapter, among the settlers of the frontier concerning an attack from the Indians in the spring of 1780. They had been so completely routed the year before, that it was supposed they would not venture again upon their missions of plunder and death. The inhabitants of Fort Wheeler, among others, entertained the same opinion and Mr. Van Campen having recovered from his sickness, was called upon by his father to go and assist in re-building his house, which had been burned

by the Indians, and make preparation for raising grain. He therefore left the fort, late in the month of March, in company with his father, a younger brother, an uncle and cousin, and one Peter Pence, who proceeded to take possession of their farms, his uncle of one, and his father of another. They were about half a mile apart and four miles distant from the fort. Here, each party fixing an encampment, commenced its preparations for making sugar and for rearing their dwellings. Not anticipating danger, they had only two rifles, one with each company, and in other respects, were wholly unprepared for an attack from their foes.

The Indians in making their descent upon the frontier settlements, usually proceeded in a body until they came into the vicinity of these, where they would separate into small parties, and for the purpose of striking greater terror upon the inhabitants, attack them at different points along the line open to their incursions. They usually came as far as the Wyalusing Flatts and from that point, a part would go to the settlements on the Delaware, some descend the east branch of the Susquehanna, and others the west branch of the same river. In the present instance, the party of seven which had made prisoners of Bennett and Hammond, was accompanied by ten others, who, as soon as they came into the neighborhood of Wyoming, struck off, that they might fall upon the inhabitants below. The latter party descended the river and in the vicinity of Shawnee Flatts, came upon one named Asa Upson, whom they killed, and a

boy called Rogers, who was taken prisoner. They next advanced to the waters of Fishing Creek, where they discovered Van Campen's uncle who with his son and Peter Pence, was at work. His uncle they killed, and took the boy and Peter along with them as prisoners. Taking possession of the rifle, they marched on, with their prisoners up the creek, and soon saw before them the appearance of other settlers. It was Van Campen with his father and brother. Securing their prisoners, they crept cautiously up, and suddenly burst upon this unsuspecting company. The father was thrust through with a spear, and as he fell, the Indian released his hold and it stood upright, from his transfixed breast. The warrior, taking his knife from his girdle, scalped his victim, who was lying in the agonies of death, and then cut the throat of the dying man, from ear to ear.—The little brother, who stood by Van Campen's side, as he saw this last act, raised his eyes, and with an agonizing look, said, "*father is killed.*" In an instant the hatchet was gleaming over *his* head, and the next moment, the little boy, too, was struggling with his dying pangs. Van Campen was seized by two warriors, who each laid hold of one of his arms, and another coming up, took the scalp from his expiring brother and threw him across the fire. Then the warrior who had killed and had been scalping his father, placed one foot on the body, and drew out his spear. But his thirst for blood was still unquenched; with the reeking blade he came towards Van Campen, and aiming at his body made a violent thrust. But



the latter, perceiving the movement, quickly shrank to one side, and the spear passed through his vest and shirt, and made a slight wound in his flesh. The Indians, who had hold of him, then seized the weapon and secured his arms behind him, appearing to be satisfied with the number slain.

This was a trying scene for Van Campen. His honored father lay before him, a slaughtered victim. The dark smoke which went curling up towards heaven, from the fire near, bore in its deep folds, the incense of a brother's blood,—too darling a sacrifice to be met, with an unblanched cheek. Yet what could he say—or, what do! His little brother had no doubt fallen, because of the agony he had expressed for his dying father;—should he, too, allow the deep current of his emotions, to break away from their pent up channel, and overwhelm him with a flood of grief! This would be to expose himself to certain death. Yet he would as soon die, almost, as live, with the deep sorrow that was pressing him down to the earth. But amid the whole, he preserved his countenance erect—not a single muscle of his face betrayed the agitation within—and there was no sign which gave the least indication of fear. The savages, beholding his apparent indifference, ceased from the fury of their rage and the tumultuous wave passed over, leaving him the lone survivor of the wreck around. They took him prisoner and pursued their march up Fishing Creek, leading along two of his father's horses, upon which they had mounted their baggage.

Upon coming to the vicinity of a place called Huntington, they again discovered inhabitants, and dispatched four of their number to go and take a survey of the scene before them, and then come back and report. They were fortunately discovered by the settlers, who immediately fled, but the Indians shot at them and wounded a Captain Ransom in the shoulder. Proceeding on their way they came, the next morning, to the head of what was called Henlock's Creek, and the Indians again perceived that they were in the vicinity of inhabitants. It was the place of one Pike, who was with his wife and child at a camp, engaged in making sugar. Here one of the Indians, who could speak a little English, told Van Campen that he must stand out in an open place, and call to those that were near, and have them come towards him, threatening to put him to death if he did not do as he was ordered. All the others concealed themselves and Van Campen, thinking it best to obey them, rather than lose his life, called aloud as though he desired some assistance. He was answered—"What do you want?"—"Come here," was the reply. In a moment Pike came running up, and when he was just at hand, the savages rushed out upon him, with their tomahawks, and brandished one over his head. The poor fellow immediately dropped on his knees and begged for quarters. They appeared to be pleased with the success of their little stratagem, and with the manner in which they had frightened him, and were willing to spare his life.

Pike then led them to his camp where they found

his wife and child; these they stripped of all their clothing, except a thin, light garment and one of the savages, more blood-thirsty than the others, took the little child by the heels and swung it around, with the intention of dashing out its brains against a tree. The infant screamed, and the poor mother, with a frantic shriek, flew to its relief, catching hold of the warrior's arm. The Indian chief, Mohawk, who was one of this party, beholding the situation of the woman came up and took away the child from this cruel wretch, and gave it to the agonized mother.—He then gave her the clothing which had been torn from her, and taking out his paint box, painted her, and pointing in the direction he wished her to go, said, "*joggo, squaw.*" She departed and traveling on foot arrived safely at Wyoming, where she gave a report of what had transpired.

A few extracts from a diary, which was kept by Lieutenant Jenkins, of the valley of Wyoming, and which belongs to the time of which we have been speaking may not be uninteresting to the reader.\*

"March 27th.—Bennett and son, and Hammond taken and carried off, supposed to be done by the Indians. The same day Upson scalped near William Stewart's house, and young Rogers taken.

"March 28th.—Several scouting parties sent out, but make no discoveries of the enemy.

"March 29th.—Esquire Franklin went to Hunt-

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\*As quoted by Stone in his History of Wyoming.

ington on a scout, and was attacked by the Indians, at or near his own house, and two of his party murdered—Ransom and Parker.\*

“March 30th.—Mrs. Pike came in this day, and informed that she and her husband were in the woods making sugar, and were surrounded by a party of about thirty Indians, (there were only ten,) who had several prisoners with them, and two horses. They took her husband and carried him off with them, and painted her and sent her in. They killed the horses before they left the cabin where she was. One of the prisoners told her that the Indians had killed three or four men at Fishing Creek.”

Taking Pike with them the Indians, after having killed the two horses, as just mentioned, proceeded on their way, crossing the mountain and coming to what was called Little Tunkhannock Creek, in the mouth of which stream, they had concealed their canoes. They embarked in these, crossed over the Susquehanna, and paddled along the edge of the stream until they came to the mouth of Big Tunkhannock Creek; after passing by which, they went on shore, cutting holes in the bottoms of their little barks and sent them floating down the river. They passed along up through the valley of the Susquehanna, without meeting with any thing worthy of note, till they

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\*Mr. Van Campen says that Ransom was only wounded in the shoulder, and that he recovered his health, and was well afterwards. He does not know that any one was killed at that time, and supposes there was not from the fact that no scalp was taken. They might have killed Parker, however, without taking his scalp.

came to Meshoppen Creek, where the prisoners discovered something very strange in the appearance of their captors. Their countenances suddenly were lighted up with revenge ; their eyes darted fire, and their every look was kindled with the strong expressions of rage. The prisoners saw around them no cause for this unexpected change in their actions, and wondered what could be the matter. They were led to entertain the most fearful apprehensions, concerning their fate, beginning to anticipate a sudden and terrible death. Another glance at the party, which we have left, is here necessary to explain the reason of these movements.

Hammond and Bennett were lying between their captors ; it was the first night after they were taken, and they were in hopes that some opportunity would present itself, for rising upon the party by which they were detained. Bennett, who was really a brave man, had some hesitation about acting, for fear that a failure would decide the fate of his boy. He did not wish to engage, without a strong probability of success. The thoughts of each one were occupied, while the warriors were held in profound sleep ; Bennett, for the reasons given, viewing their proposed enterprise somewhat reluctantly, and Hammond, watching for the favorable moment to arrive, when they could perform the work of death, and escape. They continued thus until nearly the break of day, when the Indians arose, and unbinding their prisoners, took them down to a little creek, near which they had encamped, that they might there perform their accus-



tomed morning ablution. Upon returning, Hammond whispered to Bennett, that now would be their time to watch the opportunity for making an attack.—Bennett answered that they had better not. There was no chance for the other to urge his purpose, and they went back to their places, without saying any thing more. The Indians then laid down, and their prisoners with them, to take another nap, but the latter were left unbound. As soon as the savages were again in the soft embraces of sleep, Hammond passed the signal over to Bennett, and the latter shook his head. The other could not remonstrate, for their communications must be made in silence, he therefore remained in the greatest anxiety, until the time for action had passed, and the broad light of day soon chased away the dreams which hung around the slumbering warrior. Hammond then gave Bennett to understand, that he would not go one step farther with him, that they had enjoyed as fair an opportunity as they could have desired, for making an escape, and he had not been willing to embrace it, and that now he should be left to make his way along as he best could, for he, Hammond, was determined to take his first chance for flight. Bennett well understood the fleetness, as well as decision of the other, and was perfectly assured that he would make his escape, if he once resolved to do so. He therefore besought his companion, that he would go with them one day longer, stating the embarrassment he felt, on account of his boy, and that the circumstances with which they had been favored, were

such as they had not anticipated, and that he was in a measure unprepared to act; but he might rely upon it, that he would not fail to co-operate with him, in any thing he should propose during the coming night. Hammond was persuaded to continue with them another day; and during their progress, the two prisoners managed to be together as much as possible without incurring suspicion, so that their plans for the proposed attack, were well matured before it came night. But though they had used great caution in conversing with each other, the savages had observed that they were more than usually intimate, and began to watch them with a more careful eye, every now and then bringing upon them a dark and significant frown. Hammond resorted again to his music, but it failed of producing its wonted effect. The melody of his voice passed over them, as though it had been unheard, and the clear and lively notes of his whistle, fell upon their ears without starting any thing, which even bordered upon a smile. They all looked gruffly and sullen, not excepting the one with whom Hammond had become quite a favorite, on account of his pleasing songs and insinuating manners. The latter finding that his efforts to please were in vain, relaxed into his accustomed careless manner, and stepped along as though he was beyond the reach of trouble.

Bennett, on the contrary, bore upon him the marks of anxiety. It was but too apparent from his looks, that he apprehended another failure, and the Indians conceiving, perhaps, some dislike, treated him rather roughly, placing upon him, in addition to his own, the

pack which had before been carried by Hammond.

When it came night, they were pinioned more closely than they had been before, and the hope of destroying these savages, began to desert them. Yet they looked forward to the morning, when they expected to be unloosed, as they were on the one previous. Their encampment was near Meshoppen Creek, and they anxiously awaited the time when the savages would go down to the creek to wash, trusting that they would be left unbound, when they returned.

Soon the first light of morning began to send up a few timorous rays in the east, and the Indians, true to their habit, arose, unloosed their prisoners, and went down to the creek, as had been anticipated.— But when they came back they were careful to make fast their captives between two warriors, leaving the boy only, unbound. They were thus disappointed, and began to give up all ideas of making an escape. Hammond, especially, was impatient, and was tossed about with restless anxiety. He was lying near the Indian who had been rather prepossessed in his favor, and this fellow, who was called English, spoke to him and said, “lie still, Yankee ;—Yankee—” Hammond answered that he could n’t sleep, the cord hurt him so. With this the Indian slipped out his knife to him, that he might loosen his fetters a little, and be able to obtain more rest. Hammond was very careful to use the knife in relieving himself from bondage, and having silently cut himself loose, handed the instrument over to Bennett, who used it with equal success.

It had previously been agreed upon, in case of their being free to make an attack, that Hammond should take a war-spear, Bennett the wood-hatchet, having been careful to observe where it was placed, and the little boy was to stand by the guns, that had been stacked against a tree. He was not to fire unless a warrior should attempt to take possession of them.— One of the Indians, upon returning from the creek, had not laid down with the others, but sat by the fire with his blanket partly over his head, and was engaged in picking and eating the roasted head of a deer. He sat with his face turned partly from them, and they were in hopes of creeping out from their places without being discovered. When all the rest were asleep, they began slowly to draw themselves out from between the warriors, and were so happy as to remove, without causing them to awake. Hammond then took one of the spears that were sticking in the ground at the head of where each one lay, and motioning to Bennett to be ready, came up behind the Indian that was taking his repast, and aiming for his heart, plunged the spear through his body. He sprang forward with a yell, upon the fire immediately before him. This started the other warriors, and as they arose up, Bennett sank his hatchet into the heads of four. Hammond had been detained in endeavoring to extricate his spear. He had made such a violent thrust, that this passed through the Indian's breast bone, which closed in upon it, and fastened it so that he could not draw it out. He pulled away at it, and jerked the Indian off the fire, but it still remain-

ed, as firmly fixed as ever. Had he, as he afterwards said, let that go and taken another one, he might have done greater execution ; but as it was, this was the only one he killed. Two of the party made their escape by fleeing into the woods. The boy who stood by the guns attempted to fire at one of these, but finding the first rifle, which he took up, unloaded, he tried a second and a third, until he came to the fourth, which contained a charge. They had by this time run away so far, that it was in vain to fire, yet one of them was supposed to have been severely wounded by Bennett, who caught up a spear and hurled at him striking him in the back.

They were thus left masters of the field, five of the party lying dead upon the ground. Yet it was dangerous to remain long where they were, and selecting from their booty, whatever they wished to carry with them, they threw the remainder upon the burning logs, as well as the bodies of the Indians that were slain, and then directed their course towards Wyoming, and arrived in safety at their homes.\*

It was at this place that the Indians, who were leading along the company of prisoners, of which Mr. Van Campen was one, became so much altered in their manners and aspect. They were expecting to meet the warriors from whom they had parted, as

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\*This story is briefly sketched by Stone in his History of Wyoming, with some variation, however, in the actors of this scene. It was Hammond instead of Bennett, who speared the warrior, so says Mr. Van Campen, and so says his nephew, Amariah Hammond Esq., from whom the author received the history of this affair.



soon as they should reach the Wyalusing Flatts, which were a few miles above. But here they undoubtedly saw the marks of death, and were led to entertain fears concerning the fate of their companions. How much they saw, we cannot tell, yet they must have seen enough to have revealed a part, if not the whole of the secret of the sad disaster which was brought upon their friends ; for Mr. Van Campen says that, "when they came to this place, they showed signs of great anger, and their eyes darted fire, as they looked at one another, and at the prisoners."

✱ But Van Campen like Hammond, did not fancy the idea, even if his life should be spared, of a journey through to Niagara, the head-quarters of the Indians. The night after Pike was taken, he began to meditate an attack upon his captors. Himself, with other prisoners they pinioned, and while they were thus lying around their night-fire, he began to reflect upon the scenes through which they had been hurried. These arose one after another to his mind, and prevented him from obtaining sleep, which seemed to settle on all but him. The scene of a murdered father, and of a tomahawked brother, was presented to his view, and he was now lying with the perpetrators of these horrid acts. The prospect before him was uncertain ; he might die by a lingering and cruel death after he reached the end of their journey, or he might fall under the hatchet by the way. In either event, it would be far better for him to make some effort to escape, even though that effort should cost him his life.

The only probable way of escape, that presented itself to his mind, was to consult with his fellow prisoners, and resolve upon the destruction of the whole party.

He had an opportunity of communicating his designs to them during the next day. They regarded it, however, as a scheme entirely visionary, for three men to think of dispatching ten Indians. Yet he spread before them the advantages which three men, awake, and active, would have over ten that were asleep—stated to them further, that as they were the first prisoners which would be taken in, after the destruction of the Indian villages and corn by Sullivan, the summer before, they would, in all probability, be tied to the stake, and subjected to a cruel and lingering death. He told them that now they had an inch of ground upon which to fight, and they might perhaps gain their point; but if they failed, it would only be death, and they might as well die one way as another.

That day passed and at night, the Indians encamped and secured their prisoners, as before. The morning came, and as they proceeded on their way, Van Campen renewed his suggestions to dispatch them on the coming night, and urged them to decide the question without any further delay. They were removing continually from their homes, into the heart of the enemy's country, and if they should advance too far, they might not be able to return again, even if they should effect their escape. The prisoners agreed to make a trial, but they were at a loss to know how it should be done. Van Campen said, "Disarm them,

and take each a tomahawk, and come to close work at once. There are three of us, and if we plant our blows with judgment, three times three, will make nine. The tenth we can kill at our leisure." They were suited with this proposal in part ; but were not decided about using the tomahawk altogether. One of them proposed to fire at those on one side, with a gun, while two of the three were using the hatchet. Van Campen urged in opposition to this, that it would be a very uncertain way of making an attack : the first shot fired might give the alarm, and their enemies might rise, and see that it was only the prisoners, and defeat them before they carried their project into execution.

He was obliged, however, to yield to their plan.— Peter Pence was to take charge of the guns, Pike and Van Campen were to wield the tomahawk. When it came night the prisoners cut and carried a goodly supply of wood so that the Indians might have a large fire, and then they were tied as usual, and laid in their places. While they were lying here one of the savages had occasion to use his knife and dropped it at Van Campen's feet, and he immediately turned one foot over it, thus hiding it from view. Presently they all laid down, and were soon in the soft embraces of sleep. At about midnight, Van Campen arose and looked around. Every thing appeared favorable, and he began to think of entering upon the work of death. He had few misgivings of heart ; a father's and a brother's blood was calling for vengeance, and this steeled his mind to sympathy and nerved his arm for

action. He immediately went with the knife to Pence—whom he cut loose, and he in turn performed the same office for him. He then cut Pike loose, and they all forthwith began silently to disarm the Indians. The guns were stationed against a tree near the encampment. Pence then prepared himself to shoot, Pike and Van Campen took their places with the tomahawk. The latter was to kill three on the right wing, the former two on the left.—That moment Pike's two awoke, and were getting up; Pike proved a coward, and laid down. It was a critical moment. Van Campen saw that there was no time to be lost; their heads were turned up fair, and he planted the hatchet deep into them and then turned to the destruction of his own three men. As he was striking his tomahawk in the head of the last, Pence fired and did good execution, killing four. The only one left, started with a bound away from the fire, but perceiving that the attack was from the prisoners, he gave the war-whoop, and darted for the guns.—Van Campen was quick to intercept him, and the contest then turned between the two. As the latter raised the hatchet, the other quickly turned to run from him, yet he followed and struck at his head, but missed his aim, the tomahawk entering the back of the Indian's neck, who immediately fell; and Van Campen's foot slipping, he, too, came down by his side, and they both clenched, each as they were, on the ground. The warrior with his naked arm, caught Van Campen around the neck, and hugged him so close that he could hardly breathe. They had a most violent and

doubtful struggle, Van Campen at one moment being uppermost, and then the Indian, from whose wound, the blood ran freely into the face of the other, getting into his eyes, and almost obscuring his sight. During the whole scuffle, the warrior kept feeling around behind him for his scalping knife, which, if he had obtained, would have shortly ended the strife. Van Campen perceiving this, and being almost suffocated with blood, was wrought up to an agony of feeling, and bringing one of his feet up, caught his toes in the warrior's belt, and gave a violent spring, which threw them several feet apart. They both rose at the same time and the savage took to his heels and ran. It was a minute or more before Van Campen cleared his eyes so that he could see, he was a little time in hunting the tomahawk which had fallen from the wound, and had been partly covered up during the scuffle, so that when he was prepared for pursuit, the other had gone too far to be overtaken. He was the only one who escaped, and made out to return to his own people. This fact, Mr. Van Campen learned from the Indian's own mouth, several years after the war. The warrior's name was Mohawk. He was a stout, active, and daring fellow, and held the office of Chief in one of his tribes.

As soon as Van Campen ended his struggle with Mohawk,\* he returned to his fellow prisoners. Pike,

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\*This story also is briefly sketched in Stone's history of Wyoming, who introduces it thus :—"In one of these savage incursions, a man named Camp—afterwards Major Camp—of Allegany County, of the



however, was powerless. He was found on his knees endeavoring to pray, while Pence was cursing and swearing at him most furiously, charging him with being a rascally coward, and telling him that it was no time to pray, when he ought to be fighting. Nine Indians were lying dead upon the ground, and the season of strife had ended, leaving the prisoners masters of the field. They took possession of all the guns, blankets and match-coats. There were twelve guns, ten owned by the party, and two that had been taken from Van Campen and his uncle. They then scalped the warriors they had killed, and recovered those that had been taken from their friends, Van Campen stringing them all on his belt for safe keeping.

This scene was performed in less time, perhaps, than has been occupied in describing it, and as there were several hours of the night yet remaining, Van Campen thought best to remove from the fire, and be on their guard lest the Indian who had escaped might fall in with another party of warriors, and lead them back to recover what had been lost.

The two little boys, who were also prisoners, had taken the alarm and fled from the scene of action.— While Van Campen was at his station, eagerly watching for the appearance of day, his attention was arrested by hearing the tread of some one, not far distant, and turning his eye in the direction whence

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\*state of New York &c." It is rather singular that this author should have so mistaken the name, especially since it was well known to the one whom he gives as his authority.

the sound proceeded, he could just distinguish the outlines of some one who was coming towards him. He immediately cocked his rifle, and held it to the tree, behind which he was standing, with his eye upon the object, which he supposed to be an Indian, and waited for its appearance, with his finger on the trigger of his gun. It came nearer and nearer, and just as he was on the point of firing, the thought struck him that he might be aiming at one of the little boys. He immediately called out—"Who's there?" Young Rogers answered—"It's me." The answer, in a voice that was known, came upon him like an electric shock. His arms dropped powerless by his side, and if, but a few moments before, he had shown himself equal to the most daring act of bravery, he now seemed to manifest the trepidation of fear. The thought that he was just upon the point of firing at the young innocent by his side, almost unmanned him;—the effect, which the slaughter he had just made, produced on his mind, was nothing in the comparison. But fortunately the boy was unharmed, and Van Campen was spared the painful thoughts which he must have endured, had he taken the life of the lad at whom he was aiming.

The prisoners kept possession of the battle-ground until morning, and then gathering whatever of the Indian baggage they could carry, began to thread their way towards home.

There is another scene of interest, growing out of the one which we have been describing, which gives us some further insight to the history of the Indian

Chief, Mohawk, and which will serve to impress the with reader a just idea of the number of depredations that occurred at this period. While the two parties of Indian warriors, whose progress we have been describing, were executing the purpose of their mission, the celebrated war-chief, Brant, was descending with a company of Tories and Indians, into the region of Schoharie. On his way he came across a company of fourteen men, who had been sent out under the command of Captain Alexander Harper, to inspect the movements of the suspicious Tory, who, it was supposed, was about commencing the labor of making maple sugar, and to engage himself in the manufacture of the same article. While in the execution of this command, and without a thought of the presence of the lurking savage, he was approached by the party under Brant, the first monition of whose coming, he had in the loss of three of his men who were engaged at work. Next appeared the Mohawk chief, who immediately rushed in with the uplifted tomahawk, and advancing to Captain Harper, observed—"Harper, I am sorry to find you here!" "Why are you sorry, Captain Brant?" was the reply. "Because," replied the chief, "I *must* kill you, although we were school-mates in our youth"—at the same time raising the hatchet, as though about to strike.—But his arm suddenly dropped, and fixing his keen eye upon Harper he enquired—"Are there any regular troops at the fort in Schoharie?" Harper, as quick as thought, determining in his answer, to startle the Indian chief, and prevent, if possible, his descent

upon the settlements, told him, though contrary to the truth, that the forts had been strengthened a few days before, by the arrival of three hundred Continental troops. This information, given with a look of the utmost assurance, served to disconcert, for a moment, the noble warrior, and, preventing the further shedding of blood, he called a council of his subordinate chiefs. The fate of the prisoners was made the subject of debate. Long and earnestly did the Indians contend that they should be put to death, yet Brant, whose word was regarded as law, decided in their favor, and they were permitted to live.

The conviction produced on the mind of this warrior, of the presence of so large a force, determined him to retrace his steps to Niagara, and taking his prisoners he commenced his return march. It was not, however, without again questioning Harper, giving him to understand that he strongly suspected the truth of his statement, yet the prisoner bore so well, the severe scrutiny of the Indian's eye, that the warrior was once more misled by the sincerity which was apparent in every look of his informant, and abandoned the idea of striking his intended blow upon the settlements of Schoharie. The warriors, disappointed in their expectation of plunder, demanded the lives of the little band they had taken, yet the Mohawk chief promised them safety, if they would be conducted by him to Niagara as prisoners of war.

Their march was commenced, attended with pain, difficulty and adventure. Having to carry along the spoils, which the Indian had taken on his route, the

prisoners found themselves subjected to the most oppressive burdens, and were ready at times, to sink under the fatigues of the way. But a resolute mind sustained their drooping spirits, and enabled them to keep pace, though with much effort, with the progress of their foes. As they proceeded on their course, Brant fell in with a Tory, who was well acquainted with the party he had taken, and who urged him to give them all to the tomahawk and the scalping knife, stating that their news respecting the arrival of troops, was nothing but a fabrication. Harper was then made to pass through the trying ordeal of another examination, yet so well did he counterfeit the signs of sincerity and truth, that the glittering tomahawk was again withdrawn from over his head.

The party of warriors continued their march, descending the Delaware a sufficient distance, then crossing over to Ogikwaga, where they constructed floats, with which they sailed down the Susquehanna as far as Tioga Point. Here the prisoners were visited with a new and unexpected trial. \*—During his march from Niagara on this expedition, Brant had detached eleven of his warriors to fall upon the Minisink settlements for prisoners.† This detachment, as

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\*See Stone's Life of Brant, Vol. 2. page 59.

†His warriors did not, as we have seen, descend the Delaware for prisoners, but fell upon the settlements bordering upon the Susquehanna, and the original party consisted of seventeen instead of eleven. Whenever the Indians invaded the settlements on the Delaware, it was usually with a larger company than eleven, since the inhabitants living along this river were quite numerous, and an incursion among them was attended with considerable danger, while



it subsequently appeared, had succeeded in taking captive five athletic men, whom they secured and brought with them as far as Tioga Point.\* The Indians sleep very soundly, and the five prisoners had resolved at the first opportunity to make their escape. While encamped at this place during the night, one of the men succeeded in extricating his hands from the binding cords, and with the utmost caution unloosed his four companions. The Indians were locked in the arms of deep sleep around them. Silently, without causing a leaf to rustle, they each snatched a tomahawk from the girdles of their unconscious enemies, and in a moment nine of them were quivering in the agonies of death. The two others were awakened, and springing upon their feet, attempted to escape.— One of them was struck with a hatchet between the shoulders, but the other fled.† The narrative continues—“As Brant and his warriors approached this point of their journey, some of his Indians having raised a whoop, it was instantly returned by a single

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on the contrary, the scouts dispatched into the valley of the Susquehanna, a more thinly settled region, did not often exceed the number mentioned.

\*The number taken agrees exactly with that of the captives, among whom was Mr. Van Campen, three of them, men, and two, boys. The party advanced till within about fifteen miles of Tioga Point.

†This story agrees, in time, place, and circumstance, as perfectly with the one which has been related of Mr. Van Campen, as is possible for stories to agree which come from different authorities. The number of prisoners is the same, and the manner in which the escaping warrior was wounded is also the same; but as the number of the party was stated as being eleven, it was necessary to account for the good fortune of one who was not there.

voice, with the *death yell* ! Startled at this unexpected signal, Brant's warriors rushed forward to ascertain the cause. But they were not long in doubt, the lone warrior met them, and soon related to his brethren the melancholy fate of his companions. The effect upon the warriors, who gathered in a group to hear the recital, was inexpressibly fearful. Rage, and a desire for revenge, seemed to kindle every bosom, and light every eye, as with burning coals.— They gathered round the prisoners in a circle, and began to make unequivocal preparations for hacking them to pieces. Harper and his men, of course gave up for lost, not doubting that their doom was fixed and irreversible. But at this moment deliverance came from an unexpected quarter. While their knives were unsheathing, and their hatchets glittering, as they were flourished in the sunbeams, the only survivor of the murdered party rushed into the circle." Himself a chief, he waved his hand as a signal by which to command attention, and notify them of his desire to speak. The warriors immediately turned their eyes upon their unfortunate comrade, and were anxiously awaiting the first words that should break from his lips. He commenced his speech with all the authority and dignity of an Indian sachem ; but what was their surprise to find, that as he advanced, his plea was in favor of the unfortunate victims upon whom they were about to let loose the fury of their rage. The prisoners, too, could understand from the changed looks of those around them, that the noble chief was making his address in their

behalf, and Harper, who was somewhat acquainted with the Indian tongue, understood its import as follows :—"Warriors, your looks are changed! The tale of our butchered brothers, has fired you to take revenge. But where—the hands that are stained with blood? Are these men guilty of the slain warriors? Take no blood from the innocent! The Great Spirit will be angry!" His appeal produced the desired effect. The burning eye of the warrior ceased to shoot forth the deep fire of revenge, and the savage looks, that had encompassed the prisoners with the terrific forms of vengeance, suddenly died away, and gave to their agonized spirits the feeble wings of hope.

It so happened, that this chief, who must have been Mohawk, had years before been acquainted with the prisoners, whom he saw when he was brought to the main body of Indians, and beholding their situation, he generously interposed in their favor.

The biographer of Brant justly says of this deed—"It was a noble action, worthy of the proudest era of chivalry, and, in the palmy days of Greece and Rome, would have insured him almost 'an apotheosis and rites divine.' The interposition of Pocahontas, in favor of Captain Smith, before the rude court of Powhattan, was perhaps more romantic; but when the motive which prompted the generous action of the princess is considered, the transaction now under review, exhibits the most genuine benevolence. Pocahontas was moved by the tender passion—the Mohawk sachem by the feelings of magnanimity, and the eternal principles of justice. It is a matter of

regret that the name of this high-souled warrior is lost, as, alas! have been too many that might have served to relieve the dark and vengeful portraiture of Indian character, which it has so well pleased the white man to draw! The prisoners themselves, were so impressed with the manner of their signal deliverance, that they justly attributed it to a direct interposition of the providence of God."

Harper and his men, were taken to Niagara, and after an imprisonment of three years, by an exchange of prisoners were permitted to return to their own country and homes.

That the noble actor in this scene, was the warrior who escaped from the hatchet of Van Campen, there can be but little doubt, for the story of each is the same in every particular, excepting the number of Indians in the party, one account giving it as ten, the other, as eleven. The deed seems, too, to be characteristic of the chief, Mohawk, for we have seen him before, generously interposing in behalf of Mrs. Pike's child, whose brains one of his men was about to dash out against a tree; at the same time, freely surrendering her clothing, and sending her in the direction of safety, with his mark upon her, to shield her from the violence of any savages whom she might meet.

We will return again to the party of Mr. Van Campen, which had rendered itself free by the slaughter of its captors. They remained in safety, each one at his station until the approach of morning light, when they constructed a raft, and having placed

upon it, the Indian baggage which fell into their hands, set sail for Wyoming the nearest settlement on the river. They had not gone far, however, before their raft began to give way, and after using their utmost endeavors to keep it together, they were obliged to run the crazy thing ashore and betake themselves to the more laborious journey by land.— They left behind, a great portion of their baggage, but took with them, the guns and ammunition. Late in the afternoon they arrived at Wyalusing, and marching thence, came to the Narrows at evening.

Near this place, they discovered a smoke before them, rising from the low ground bordering on the river, and saw also a fire lying at the shore, by which appearances, they were led to conclude, that a party of Indians had passed them during the course of the day, and had halted for the night. They had no other alternative than to rout them, or pass a mountain, which lay before them, and in *crossing* which they would be obliged to encounter the enemy that was still lying upon the north side. Yet they might incur some danger in making an attack upon the enemy, but they concluded, from the size of the raft that the party must be small, and as they had made the first discovery, they supposed that the advantage would be on their side. They were well armed, each being supplied with two rifles, and the only fear that entered Van Campen's mind, was, that Pike would prove a coward as he had done before. Yet he thought it best to ascertain the numbers and situation of the enemy, and if every thing was favorable, he was to give the signal.



for attack. He crept down the hill silently, and came so near as to behold the fire and packs, but saw no Indians. Concluding that they had gone out to hunt for meat, he motioned his men to come on. They came, and taking the packs from the deserted camp, threw them on the raft, that was near by, and with paddles and setting poles drove her briskly for the opposite side of the river. When they had passed nearly out of the reach of gun-shot, two Indians came up to the bank, whence the raft had been taken, and beholding it merrily conveying off another party, drew up their rifles and fired, but without doing any injury. They soon passed under cover of an island, and coasted a long its border, leaving the Indians out of sight. They descended the river several miles, until they supposed themselves out of the reach of the enemy, and drew up to the shore. They landed on an island, and being damp and cold, began to look about for some means of making a fire. Having collected the materials they kindled one in a deep hole, where they were out of sight and could imagine themselves perfectly shielded from being discovered by the enemy.

They had not been long at their encampment before their attention was arrested by the breaking of snow crust near by, which sounded like the noise of some one stepping. Pike was the first to take the alarm.—He said that the Indians had followed them, and they would certainly be shot down where they were. He became quite annoying, with his anxiety and his fears, so much so that Van Campen, with a view to make him

quiet, threatened to shoot him if he did not keep still. He was silent for a moment, and the stepping began to be heard more distinctly, and seemed to be approaching nearer and nearer the fire. Van Campen took his position and stood with his rifle cocked, and prepared to put a ball through the unknown assailant as soon as he should come in sight. At length the enemy, which had been the occasion of so much alarm, presented itself in the form of a noble racoon, and, as it came within the gleaming of the fire-light, was a fair object for the rifle. Van Campen shot, and hit him.—The animal gave a squeal, and Pike, mistaking it, perhaps, for the yell of an Indian, was frightened out of his wits, jumped up, and halloed at the utmost stretch of his voice, “Quarters! quarters! gentlemen; for heaven’s sake, quarters!” Van Campen, taking up the racoon by one of its legs, threw it down near the fire and said, “Here, you cowardly rascal! skin that, and let’s have the *quarters* for supper.” Pike was better at cooking than he was at fighting, and soon had the animal ready for the coals upon which it was laid to broil. It was a fine treat for them, and they ate it with many a hearty laugh, and a good joke at Pike, for his excellent “*quarters*.” They rested during the night without any further alarm, and in the morning, embarked upon their float, and began to sail down the river. They pursued their course along the silent stream, without interruption, and reached Wyoming at evening. They were received with many demonstrations of joy, their coming being as little anticipated, as life from the dead.

Van Campen, after resting one day, procured a canoe, and with Pence and his little cousin, began to descend the river for Northumberland, at night, it being more safe than to journey by day. He arrived before the dawn at Fort Jenkins, near which he found Col. Kelly encamped, with about a hundred men. In consequence of the late Indian depredations, he had raised his company and gone out in pursuit of the enemy. He had been up the west branch of the Susquehanna, and had thence crossed over to the east branch, and the head of the Chuliquaka, to Fishing Creek. Passing through the gap at the end of Nob Mountain, he came to where Van Campen's father and uncle had been killed. Here he found their bodies just as the savages had left them. That of his brother had been nearly consumed by the fire, yet the parts that were left, were committed to the earth with the remains of the other two.

From Col. Kelly, Van Campen learned that his mother and her surviving family, were safely lodged in the fort. To him the anticipated meeting with his dearest earthly friend, was a subject of joy ; how much more to her, who, with the deep love of a mother's heart, was to clasp in her arms the form of her first born child ; a son whom she had wept over as dead, and whom she expected never more to behold. But though an ardent desire impelled him to seek an immediate entrance into the fort, prudence would not allow him to rush directly into the presence of his mother. Her grief at the loss of a husband who had been so inhumanly slain, of a son that had fallen

under the Indian's tomahawk, and of another carried away captive, to be the subject, perhaps, of more excruciating pain, was too overwhelming for her feelings, and she well nigh sank under the weight of her sorrow.

Supposing that the interview would be overpowering to her, the Colonel was sent in to prepare the way for his coming, and laying aside his belt of scalps, he soon after went in himself. The meeting, though introduced with the utmost caution, produced almost the anticipated effect. It was one of mingled joy and woe, in which every feeling of delight at seeing her returning son, was immediately met and driven back, by an opposing current of sorrow, at the thoughts of those, whose remembrance still drew forth the tears of grief.

As soon as these emotions subsided sufficiently to allow of the enquiries, she questioned him concerning his capture, and the way in which he had escaped.—These he related to her in the manner in which the several events took place, and as the reader has already been acquainted with the facts, they need not be repeated.

Before Mr. Van Campen's return, the commission of ensign, in the continental service, had been sent him, of a company to be commanded by Capt. Thomas Robison. He had no knowledge of this, before it came, yet as he was led by his disposition to follow the life of a soldier, he accepted of the office, and spent most of the ensuing summer in obtaining recruits, to fill out the company to which he belonged,

and which formed a part of the quota which Pennsylvania was obliged to raise for the army. Leaving Fort Jenkins, he proceeded on to Northumberland, where he received his papers, and prepared for entering upon the duties of his office.

We will relate, while passing, an incident which occurred very soon after Mr. Van Campen's return, by which it appears that Indians were still hovering around the settlements. About four miles from Northumberland, there lived the family of a Mr. Curry. His wife and himself had gone on a little visit to a neighbor, living about four miles above them, on the river, and were returning home on horse back. when they were attacked by two savages, not far from their own dwelling. The Indians fired and killed Mr. Curry, and Mrs. Curry's horse being frightened, threw her to the ground, yet without much injury. The savages immediately ran up and scalped her husband, and took her prisoner. It was very near evening and they then turned their footsteps into the deep forest. They encamped for the night, and after taking their repast, laid down to rest, leaving their prisoner, as she was a woman, unbound. Mrs. Curry awoke in the night, and finding that her captors were buried in their slumbers resolved upon making her escape. Yet she did not know but that, ere she should be out of their reach, the savages would awake and again bring her into captivity. Her most prudent course would be to leave them, without the power of tracing her footsteps. Summoning, therefore, the utmost of her resolution, she laid her hand on some



instrument of death, and ere the savages awoke, applied her feeble strength so successfully as to relieve herself of every fear of pursuit. She left them struggling with their dying groans; and directing her course back, arrived in safety at her home, having performed an act, which could have been accomplished only by the exercise of the highest bravery.

During the remainder of the year 1780, the services which Mr. Van Campen performed were mostly of a uniform character, affording little of incident except in one instance with which we will conclude the events of this year.

There was a small settlement, a part of whose inhabitants belonged to the Society of Friends, living up the North Branch of the Susquehanna at the mouth of a little stream which emptied into it, called the Catawesse, who were suspected of being favorable to the British and Indians. Every other settlement but this, in the region, had been deserted, the inhabitants having left their homes, to find in the forts, that were scattered along up and down the river, greater security and protection. These were permitted to occupy their farms without suffering at all, from the disasters that were brought upon their neighbors.— This afforded some ground for suspicion, and as Indians were found to waylay every path, upon which those who were occupied with the public business, were obliged to travel, it was supposed that they derived their information concerning the officers and their business, and received supplies of provisions, from the settlement named. The troops were consid-

erably annoyed by this game which was playing upon them, having lost several of their men, who had been caught at a distance from the camp, with too feeble a force, and killed. Col. Hunter, the commanding officer of the county of Northumberland, resolving to put an end to whatever sufferings they were compelled to bear from the settlement, directed Captain Robison to go with his company and bring in its inhabitants; saying that if they were not friendly to the British cause, it would be better for them to be removed, and in case they were, it was certainly of the utmost importance that they should be taken from a position where they had the opportunity of causing so much mischief to the country.

Captain Robison immediately made his preparations and started with the men under his command, to execute his commission. Van Campen as he belonged to the company, was one of the number, and his friend Capt. Salmon went with him as a volunteer, though without any command. A Lieutenant Hays was also a volunteer, and upon their first starting out, gave many boasts of his bravery. He was loud in telling the men what he could do, if he were only gifted with the command. He would hunt the enemy until they were driven from every hiding place, and in short, he would accomplish wonders. Salmon and Van Campen were disgusted with the bravado style in which he conducted himself, even in the hearing of his superior officers, and they determined to put his bravery to the test. Having formed their plan, they communicated the same to Captain Robison. They

told him that they had brought with them their Indian dress, and proposed that as soon as they should arrive at the house of a Mr. Gaskins, which was situated nine miles above Northumberland, he should halt, and allow them sufficient time to change their dress and paint, after which, he was desired to send Hays to the river, that he might look for Indian tracks. Their plan was approved, and as soon as they came to the appointed place, Captain Robison ordered his men to halt. Hereupon Van Campen and Salmon slipped away from the company, unobserved, and, under cover of the river's bank, array themselves in the Indian costume, and having placed upon each other a tawny complexion, awaited the arrival of the boasting Lieutenant, each selecting a tree, behind which they stood until he should come in sight.

Captain Robison, after waiting a sufficient time, allowing his men to rest and slake their thirst, requested Lieut. Hays to go to the river and see if he could discover any *moccasin tracks* in the sand. He was in a moment on his way, and the Captain whispered to his men, that they might prepare themselves to see a little sport, that Van Campen and Salmon in their Indian dress, were going to try the Lieutenant's courage. Hays was a tall red-headed man, and as he came up and began to bend his lank form over the bank, with rather a suspicious look, Van Campen and Salmon thrust their tawny faces from behind the trees, gave the Indian war-whoop, and fired their rifles over his head. Hays, frightened near to death, turned upon his heels and began to run, with the ut-

most speed, crying out as loud as he could yell, "*Boys-in-the-house! Boys-in-the-house! Engens! Engens!—Boys-in-the-house! Engens!*" He continued to run with all his might, not stopping before entering the house, and in his haste stubbed his foot against the door-sill, which threw him, with his whole length upon the floor. The soldiers, instead of being pale through fear, were immediately convulsed with laughter, which continued to break forth, peal after peal, as though it could find no end. The *Indians* too, who had occasioned the alarm, came in directly after, and joined in the sport. Hays perceiving his mistake, showed by his appearance, that he felt extremely mortified. During the remainder of their march, however, he made no further boasts of his extraordinary courage.

The company continued on its way, and reaching the Mahoning, crossed the river, and marched up towards the settlement. They proceeded as far as what was called Roaring Creek, and here Van Campen and Salmon proposed to Capt. Robison, to try again the use of their Indian dress. They volunteered to go into the settlement, disguised as Indians, and there test the friendship of the people. They told him of a hunter by the name of Wilkison, that lived not far distant and proposed to try him first. The Captain, though pleased with the idea, apprehended some danger from their visiting Wilkison, since it was uncertain, which party he favored, and as he was a brave man one or the other of them might perhaps be shot. Yet assuring him that they were willing to risk

their lives, he gave them permission to go, while the main body were to proceed to a certain point and there await their return. Accoutered in the savage war-dress, and painted so that their color should not betray them, Van Campen and Salmon started out upon their undertaking. As they drew near the house of Wilkison, they proceeded with the utmost caution, creeping along behind the bushes which intervened, and thus eluded observation. They could perceive from the smoke that was just beginning to ascend, that he was at home, and probably kindling a fire. The bushes were thick until they came within about a rod of the house, and having crept along as far as they could and remain concealed, they arose and ran across the open space, burst through the door, and raised the tomahawk over Wilkison's head. Supposing that they were savages indeed, he dropped on his knees, and begged for his life, assuring them that he was a King's-man, and a friend to Indians. They ceased manifesting further hostility, but appeared sullen, not wishing to be drawn into conversation for fear of being discovered. Wilkison on the contrary, wore his most pleasing aspect, hastened his fire, began to broil venison and show himself a very accomplished host. Having prepared a repast, he invited his Indian guests to sit by his board, and served up to them a most bountiful meal. They then assumed a look of greater satisfaction, and their host gaining a little more confidence, began to express his friendship for the royal cause, and told them moreover, that the settlement, which was on their path belonged to *King's-men*, that they were *friendly to*



*Indians, and had supplied them many times with provisions.* Van Campen and Salmon then spoke in broken English, imitating as near as possible, the Indian mode of speaking, and supplying with gestures, whatever ideas they seemed unable to express. They declared, in their broken way, their pleasure upon meeting with friends,—that they were glad to hear of so many *King's-men*, and desired him to go with them and show them "*King's-men*." He very readily gave his consent and they proceeded on together to the settlement. True enough, they here met with a very kind reception; the settlers appeared to rejoice at their coming, and were willing to show them any favor. They again resorted to their gestures and broken English, giving the inhabitants to understand that they belonged to a large party of warriors, who were not far distant, and that they were in want of provisions. They were then taken to every house in the neighborhood, each one of which added to their supply, until the three were laden with as much food as they could carry. They then retraced their steps, Wilkison still assisting them in bearing the provisions to the army. They continued their march until they arrived at the point which had been selected as the place of meeting. Captain Robison and his men were here lying in ambush, and as the little party came trudging along, well nigh wearied out with the burdens they were bearing, their hostile friends allowed them to come up until they were completely in their power, when they arose, and fired over their heads, and rushed in upon them with the

uplifted tomahawk. Wilkison threw down his pack, and attempted to escape, but finding it impossible, was willing to surrender. The treatment he received, was rather more severe, than that shown to his dusky companions, they not being placed under the hatchet, but he being threatened with the descending blow, if he would not promise to lead the company to every family, from whom provisions had been received.— Choosing the latter as the more agreeable alternative, he marched back to the settlement as the guide of those by whom he had been taken. He performed his office faithfully, conducting the party, as he had agreed, to every house of the neighborhood, thus giving them the opportunity of capturing those that had shown themselves so friendly to the cause of the King.

Having successfully accomplished the object of this expedition, Captain Robison set out on his return to Northumberland, taking with him the inhabitants of the settlement, against which, he had been sent.— Van Campen and Salmon, though they marched for a while as prisoners, as soon as the first occasion presented, washed themselves white again, and it was but too apparent from the chagrined looks of the settlers, that they understood the stratagem which had been laid for their capture. Arriving at Northumberland their case was laid before the commanding officers, and Colonel Hunter, disposed to treat them with lenity, gave them their liberty, after having received from them a pledge that they would leave the frontier settlements, and not return until after the war.

Much praise was doubtless due to Van Campen and Salmon, for the happy result of this expedition, and the little stratagems we have described, were such as were characteristic of the two whenever they were found together. They had been companions of each other from childhood, and when the war was about to be declared, they engaged with one heart in practicing with the rifle, for the British, they expected to meet on the sea board, and with the tomahawk, that they might be prepared for the Indian on the frontier. He has never, perhaps, found one who, from the character and disposition of his mind, could harmonize with him so perfectly, in all his thoughts and feelings. He never found one in whom he could place greater confidence, and two soldiers were never more happy than they, when together on duty. The reader has already been made acquainted with their sport with the militia-men from Lancaster, and upon all of their expeditions they found enough of incident to make their service nothing but a mere pastime.

Joseph Salmon, the one of whom we have been speaking, settled in the neighborhood of Fishing Creek, after the war and upon the first organization of the militia, immediately succeeding the termination of hostilities, was chosen to fill the office of Colonel. Mr. Van Campen's name was mentioned as an opposing candidate, but declining to enter the lists against his old friend, he accepted the nomination of first Major, and was elected almost unanimously, three votes only out of about five hundred being cast against him. Col. Salmon continued to reside for a long

time in the neighborhood of his early conflict, and died universally respected and beloved.

Nothing further of an interesting nature occurred in the history of Mr. Van Campen during the year 1780, and from the few incidents that have been related, it will be seen, that in this time, the settlements of the frontier endured much in suffering from repeated depredations, and in the loss of life, of property, and of the peaceful quiet of their homes.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Opening of the year 1781—Van Campen receives the office of Lieutenant—Builds a Fort—Incident—Alarm—Scouting Party—Surprise a company of savages—Return of the Scout. Care of Hessian prisoners—Amusing incident.*

The eye that now glances over the past, sees but partially, the rough storms that assailed the bark of freedom, as she was slowly struggling her way along to her destined harbor, now threatened to be stranded upon fearful rocks, now ready herself almost to unjoint, and yield her fragments to the wild fury of the wave, and now scarcely clearing the hidden shoals that promised to her a sudden and awful shipwreck.—Distance seems to shed light on the impending cloud, the tumult of clashing elements have lost their rough sounds, ere their notes fall upon the ear, and the calm features of a far removed prospect, seems to spread over it, a mildness, which deceives even the minutest observer. The winter of 1780, '81, cast over the American forest, a gloom, which was relieved by no cheering ray. The army, rent with factions, reduced to starvation, meeting the keen blasts from the north, with a tattered garment, there was little in the future to encourage the patriot's heart, and bid him look forward with the least assurance of hope. But honor and fortune had been



pledged, the resolution had been taken, and the brave spirits, that had at first encircled the banner of freedom, gathered around it still, and their feeble purpose, aided by Heaven, was yet destined to rise into strength, and triumph in the infancy of its might. By none was a greater spirit of determination shown, than by those who were compelled to bear the chief horrors of the war. The bold woodsman of the frontier, was not disheartened, though he held his life by the most uncertain tenure, and, though he had been most sorely afflicted, in the disasters that had been spread through his territory, he did not shrink from the duties of renewed hostilities. From the activity of the Indians, in the previous year, it was anticipated that they would be equally zealous, in the service of the crown, during the coming season, and as a means of defense, the company of Captain Robison, was retained on the frontier. In February of this year, Mr. Van Campen was promoted, to the office of Lieutenant, and immediately entered upon active service. For the protection of the settlements, a line of scouts, kept continually traversing the territory usually visited by small parties of Indians, and the route they generally pursued was a circuitous one, leading from the North to the West Branches of the Susquehanna, by the head waters of Little Fishing, Chilisquaka and Muncey Creeks. As Captain Robison was little acquainted with the woods, and not a very good marksman, Lieut. Van Campen usually led these parties upon their several excursions. The service was arduous, yet it was in accordance with his tastes, and the absence of incident, other than

that, which is apt to occur in marching through the forest, leads us to give this part of his history, only a few passing remarks.

For the accommodation of his men, and that he might have a convenient place, which he could occupy as his head quarters, he built a fort on the Susquehanna, about one mile above the mouth of Fishing Creek. It was built on the farm of a Mrs. McClure, and from that circumstance he named it McClure's Fort. Here he gathered his stores, and from this point, proceeded on his excursions through the woods.

In the early part of this year, there occurred a little incident in his history, which brought him into danger, the extent of which, he did not learn until some time after its occurrence. It was while he was on his way to Wilksbarre, upon some business connected with the army. The journey he had to perform led him through an uninhabited region, mostly covered with woods. Taking with him a guard of six men, he accomplished most of his journey without observing any thing to excite more than ordinary remark, but at length as they were pursuing their path, which led along the Susquehanna, at a place called Rocky Island, where the stream could be forded, they saw the marks of a party of Indians, which had apparently but just crossed over, for the water that had dropped from their leggins, was still standing in their footsteps.

Van Campen, who was well acquainted with Indian maneuvers, said to his men, " Here are the marks of quite a large party of Indians ; their tracks wear the

appearance of having been just made. Our foes cannot be far off;—they may have their eye upon us now;—we had better press on, with all speed, to our journey's end, for they will be apt to send runners ahead and waylay our path."

They did send runners ahead. From a rising point of ground they saw Van Campen on horseback, and, supposing him to be alone they dispatched four of their number to bring his scalp. These ran through the woods, and getting before him, concealed themselves behind a log, which lay near the path, and putting their guns over it, waited for his approach.—They cocked their rifles, and were just going to fire, as they saw that he was attended by others, and thinking the company too strong for them, they allowed him to pass without molestation. He was unconscious, while passing, of the danger he was in, but learned the circumstances, while a prisoner in '82. A sprightly Indian after eyeing him closely, then came up to him and said—

"I, seen you before."

"Ah"—said he, "Where?"

"On the Susquehanna," naming the place, "when," (motioning with his hand, raised about four feet from the ground,) "corn was about so high. You wore a suit of bottle green turned up with red."

"Yes."

"You wore a large cap, with a cockade, part white, part black, and a feather in the top."

"Yes."

"You rode a large bay horse."

"Yes."

"Six men with you."

"Yes."

After telling him of his narrow escape, he said—  
"We let you go, then, but we catch you now."

The company hastened its march to Wilksbarre, and reported what they had seen, that the inhabitants might be on their guard. The Indians contented themselves, however, with surprising one or two families, within the borders, and then fled into their own territory.

Lieut. Van Campen's principal engagements during the year, were at McClure's Fort, whence he directed his movements for the protection of the inhabitants living upon the North Branch of the Susquehanna.—While remaining here, news was brought, by a man who had effected his escape from the enemy while his keepers were off their guard, who reported that there were three hundred Indians on the Siemmahoning, that were hunting and laying in provisions, with the intention of making a descent upon the frontier. He said that they had formed a plan by which they were to divide their numbers into several small companies, and lay waste all the settlements on the same day.—This intelligence was communicated to Colonel Hunter, who selected a party of five, who were to go out in disguise, and reconnoiter the ground and ascertain their movements. This company consisted of Capt. Campbell, Peter and Michael Groves, and Lieutenants Cranmer and Van Campen, to the latter of whom was given the command. It was called the Grove Party.

They assumed the Indian dress and color, and taking with them an ample supply of provisions, gave the war-whoop, and started out upon their expedition.— They soon reached the waters of the Sinnemahoning, yet made no discoveries, but a few half obliterated tracks. They proceeded up this stream some distance, until they were satisfied that there could be no party of the number that had been mentioned, any where in that region, and then began to retrace their steps. Upon coming a little below the Sinnemahoning one day, they discovered, near night, as they stood on an elevated piece of ground, a smoke, which struggled up through the trees, in the valley below them, and ascended in spiral and wavy lines, through the thick and heavy atmosphere above. They were certain that it must come from a party of Indians.— They had no idea of the number, only as they could judge from the appearance of the smoke which indicated only one fire. They determined at all events to wait until the Indians should be laid to rest in the repose of night, and then ascertain their number, and if it was not too formidable, they resolved to hazard an attack. Waiting, therefore, until the time arrived, in which they supposed that the savages had all sunk into their first sound slumbers, they advanced cautiously, towards their fire, as they saw it now and then gleaming through the bushes.

As they drew near to where the savages were asleep, Van Campen went on before the others to inspect the ground, with the understanding that they should come immediately after, and be guided by him in



making the attack. He crept along with great caution, carrying the tomahawk in one hand, and the rifle in the other. The night was rather warm, and the warriors had rolled to a considerable distance from the fire, and before they were aware, Van Campen and his men, began to tread upon them, which awakened them. As they rose up, the Grove party used their tomahawks, but finding that they were rising in such numbers as to overpower them, they fired upon them with their rifles, and then raised a tremendous yell. The savages supposing that they were attacked by a large force, fled with the utmost precipitation, most of them forgetting their guns, and leaving their packs and baggage upon the ground. Van Campen and his men, thus came in possession of a number of rifles, and a considerable quantity of goods, that the Indians had plundered.— They found several scalps which had been taken from families, that were murdered on the borders of what was called Penn's Creek. There were six Indians killed in this little skirmish, and having scalped these and secured their baggage by secreting whatever they found themselves unable to carry, they directed their march towards Northumberland.

Upon coming near this place, they determined to enter it in their Indian dress. But as they were obliged to pass by a number of families before reaching the village, they were fearful lest they should occasion unnecessary alarm, and as they were about to abandon the idea, they discovered one of the inhabitants coming towards them on the path that they were traveling. They concealed themselves in some bushes

near by, and awaited his approach. As soon as he came up they rose upon him, and he supposing himself about to be given up to the tender mercies of the savage, began to plead for his life. His entreaties were not in vain. They assured him that he might pass unharmed, if he would go and inform the families on their way to Northumberland, that a scouting party was returning to its head quarters in the Indian dress. Glad to make so fortunate an escape, he joyfully ran forward and prepared the way for their kind reception. As they marched along, their every look wearing the appearance of the savage, bearing in triumph the scalps they had taken from the enemy, which they strung upon poles, as the highest trophy of a warrior, they met on every side a welcome look, and were received with the loud and cheering huzza. They proceeded to the public square, laid their packs upon the ground, and planted around them the poles that were waving the symbols of victory. The citizens gathered around this little company in crowds, and were expressing by their looks, the deepest interest in the scene before them, seemingly waiting for the history of the recent exploits of the party.

A part of their story was told in the spoils that were taken out of the packs, and brought into open view. Among them were found the scalps of women, fathers and children, that had fallen victims to the cruel and relentless foe that had just swept over their borders, leaving in their track, the bodies of the slain. As these were brought out and placed under the eager eye of the populace, they were beheld by the

women that had gathered around to witness the scene, with the sympathizing tear.

Much of the property that had been taken, belonged to settlers whom the Indians had plundered, and this as far as it could be identified, was returned to its original owners; if these were not living, to their nearest relatives.

As soon as the public curiosity had been sufficiently gratified, Van Campen and his men retired to a public house, near by, where by the aid of a little soap and water, they soon exchanged their swarthy complexions, for their own healthy color, and laying aside the Indian dress, appeared in their own uniform. The same evening they received an invitation from Colonel Hunter, to be in attendance, with their Indian scalps, on the next day at a dinner party, at his own house.

When the appointed hour arrived, they appeared to pay their respects to Col. Hunter and his lady, carrying with them, the tokens of blood and of strife. Here the *elite* of the town and of the neighboring place, Sunbury, were brought together, to meet this brave little company, and show them by their looks and words of encouragement, how much they prized the valor and decision of their countrymen, in the midst of the distressing scenes that were every day transpiring around them. Here, too, the smile of beauty met them, as if to pay a grateful acknowledgement, for the security felt, when with such defenders, in the very heart of war. The recital of their late adventure called forth, especially from the fair ones,

expressions of the utmost surprise. Many of the young ladies appeared very anxious to learn every minute circumstance, and as Van Campen had been the leader of the party, he was obliged to answer the various questions that met him on every side.

The Indian scalps were laid in one corner of the drawing room, and many of the ladies who went to view them, taxed their wits severely to find enquiries enough to gratify their curiosity. One especially, was so very particular in wishing for a detail of every slight circumstance of the event, that Van Campen became rather impatient of the rigid examination he was compelled to undergo. He was asked, in reference to the Indian camp—"And how many fires had they? and how many Indians did you see? and how were they lying? and whereabouts did you come up to them? and how did you feel?" Finding that the young Miss was beginning to put him to his trumps, he thought that he would take the lead of the conversation a little more into his own hands, and gave an answer, which, from the peculiar circumstances of the lady, was well understood. He said—"Feel!—why, madam, when I found myself among them, and asked myself whether or no, I should kill them, my heart went so much as a young lady's often does—pitte-pat, pitte-pat—that I was almost inclined to answer *no*. But again I was so much *in love* with the service of my country, that I was compelled to answer *yes*." The company smiled, and there were no further questions.

Lieut. Van Campen soon after returned to his head

quarters, at McClure's Fort, and entered again upon the service of conducting scouts around the line of the settlements. But, after the party mentioned, he found no other Indians this year, during his marches through the forest. From the vigilance with which this part of the frontier was guarded, there were very few savages found in this region, during the remainder of the year.

Having been occupied in this service until late in fall, Van Campen was ordered with his company to Lancaster. He descended the river in boats, as far as Middletown,\* where the order was countermanded by another, directing him to march to Reading, Berkshire county, where he was joined by a part of the third and fifth Pennsylvania regiments, and a company of the Congress regiment. Their principal duty while here, was to take care of a large body of Hessians, that had been taken prisoners with Gen. Burgoyne. These had been under the guard of a company of militia-men whose time had not yet expired.

The march which Van Campen's soldiers had performed, was, on account of lateness of the season and bad roads, extremely fatiguing, and as the time for which the militia were engaged continued them in service a little longer, he allowed them the space which intervened, as a season of rest. This proved grateful to the soldiers, and it no doubt served to invigorate their spirits, for in the approaching Christmas holidays,

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\* About ten miles below what is at present Harrisburg.



they were found to be sufficiently recruited to engage in the exercises of sport. Some of those belonging to Van Campen's company, determined to have a frolic with the militia-men before they should be discharged from their posts. These were stationed at a little distance out of the village near the direct road from Reading to Philadelphia, on the side of a hill, around which the way turned, and which hid the view to the road before reaching the place. When Christmas came, twelve or fifteen young soldiers set out with music in their heads, for the militia-men's camp. Just before they came to where the road turned around the hill, and while they were yet out of sight, they arrayed themselves in the Indian dress, and crept along up the ascending ground until they came in sight of the militia-men's camp. There they fired their guns, which contained an unusual charge of powder, and followed the discharge of these, by loud and continued yells. They presented themselves to the view of the soldiers, and began to jump from tree to tree, so as to produce an enlarged idea of their numbers. Their unexpected appearance, produced the intended effect. The soldiers were startled by the sudden roar of the rifles, which echoed from the deep forest, like the terrible thundering of cannon. The loud yells, too, from the supposed Indians, were enough to have startled them in a time of peace, much more when the savage was looked for at any moment, to commit his deeds of violence. The soldiers conceived an instantaneous alarm. Fear was scattered throughout all their

ranks, and with a sudden bound they started from their encampment. The sentinels fled without firing a single gun, and the whole company deserted their posts, leaving the poor Hessians, whom they were placed to guard, without a man to prevent their being retaken. But these too, apprehensive that they might be mistaken for rebels, were infected with the universal panic and showed their heels to the enemy. The camp was entirely deserted in a few moments after the first alarm had been given.

No sooner had the militia-men deserted their camp, than they began to spread the alarm, saying, "that all Niagara was let loose, that a party of several hundreds of Indians had attacked their camp, and that they had just escaped with their lives." The intelligence was soon brought to the troops at Reading, who were immediately placed in the order of defense, and who began forthwith to march, with Van Campen at their head, towards the enemy. They had not gone far, however, before they were met by some of their own soldiers, who assured them that they had started out upon a false alarm, at the same time giving them a history of the secret of the attack, and of the brave defense which had been made by the militia-men. They returned to their quarters, very much amused and with the laugh upon the poor soldiers, who had made such a display of their bravery.

But this little event which had been conceived only in sport, like many others of the same origin, was the occasion of serious difficulty. To one party it afforded the highest amusement; but to those who had com-

mitted their valor to their heels, it was a subject of constant annoyance. They could not endure the chagrin that was brought upon them by having been put to flight by a few boys, who had been disguised as Indians, and who had so successfully played off their wits upon them, of a Christmas holiday. The militia officers, whose bravery was somewhat implicated in the affair, declared that they would be satisfied with no reconciliation, short of the punishment of those who had been concerned in creating the alarm.

A court martial was held, in which Lieut. Van Campen sat with the militia officers to decide the point at issue. These affirmed it to be but right, that those who had occasioned the mischief should be whipped; while Van Campen, whose soldiers were implicated, unwilling that his men, who belonged to some of the most respectable families of that part of Pennsylvania, should suffer such a disgrace, would allow of this, only upon condition that the sentinels, who had fled from their posts without firing, should be punished as the martial law required, with death. These terms were not agreeable to the minds of the officers, and Van Campen, who declared that he would sooner see his men shot than whipped, continued to sit in court martial for the space of three weeks. A compromise was finally made between the two, it being proposed that the Sergeant who had been one of the leaders in the affair, should be broken of his rank; this was allowed, and harmony was again restored between the two parties. The Sergeant was broken of his rank at night and restored the next morning, so that his punishment

after all was more nominal than real. Immediately after, Van Campen and his men entered upon the care of the Hessian soldiers, and remained in this service until the next spring, when they were relieved by the militia, who again took them under their charge.

## CHAPTER X.

*Spring of 1782—Lieut. Van Campen proceeds to Northumberland—Rebuilds a fort at Muncey—Heads a scouting party—Discovered by the Indians—Attack—Defense—Falls into the hands of the enemy—Scene after the defeat—Van Campen saves the life of one of his soldiers at the risk his own—March towards Niagara—Critical situation—Running the gauntlet—Indian dance.*

IN the latter part of March, just at the opening of the campaign of 1782, the companies that had been stationed during the winter at Reading, were ordered back by Congress to their respective stations. Lieut. Van Campen marched, at the head of Capt. Robison's company, to Northumberland, where he was joined by Mr. Thomas Chambers, who had recently been commissioned as Ensign of the same company. Here he halted for a few days to allow his men rest, after which he was directed to march to a place called Muncey, and there rebuild a fort which had been destroyed by the Indians in the year '79. Having reached his station, he threw up a small block house, in which he placed his stores, and immediately commenced rebuilding the fort, being joined shortly after by Capt. Robison, in company with several gentlemen, among whom was a Mr. Culbertson, who was anxious to find an escort up the West Branch of the Susquehanna, into the neighborhood of Bald Eagle Creek. Here his brother had been



killed by the Indians, and being informed that some of his property had been buried and had thus escaped the violence of the enemy, he was desirous of making search to obtain it.

Arrangements were made, by which Lieut. Van Campen was to go with him, at the head of a small party of men as a guard, and after he had been permitted to examine his brother's premises, the company was directed to take a circuitous route around the settlements, and waylay the Indian paths, since it was about the time when the return of hostilities was expected. In forming this party, Van Campen selected his men according to his usual custom, taking in his hand a small piece of board, on the end of which was a mark of white paper, and standing a few rods in front of his men, who would fire at the mark, as it was held up before them and every man who hit the paper, was permitted to have his name enrolled as one of the scout. He did not usually go far before he would thus find a sufficient number for his party.

Having selected his men, twenty in number, he took with him a supply of provisions and marched along the bank of the river, while Culbertson and four others, advanced up the stream in a boat. Arriving at a place called Big Island, the boat was pulled on shore and all the party proceeded on together by land, until they reached Culbertson's farm. They came to this at evening, and encamped for the night. It was now about the middle of April, and the Indian being expected every hour to pay his annual visit to the settlements, they could not observe too much caution in their move-

ments, and having selected their resting place for the night with wisdom, placed their sentinels to give the first alarm of the enemy. They were not disturbed, however, during the night, but early the next morning, were awakened by the appearance of their foes.

While Van Campen with his company was ascending the river, a large party of Indians, not far from eighty-five were on their way down, paddling along in their little bark canoes and were intending when they came into the vicinity of the settlements to separate themselves into small companies, commit their depredations and return home. As they were floating down with the current of the river, they came to where the boat had been drawn on shore. Informed by this of the presence of inhabitants, they secured their canoes, and followed the trail of those who had, but a short time before, left the river.

It is almost impossible to escape the practiced eye of the Indian. So carefully is he trained to all the windings of the chase, that circumstances which elude the inspection of the common observer, are to him the key which unlocks the secret hiding places of his enemy. The bent twig, the bowed grass, or the broken leaf all speak to him, with an unerring voice, of the path which his victim has taken, and beckons him onward with the sure hope of success.

Such being the character of the foe that is to follow Van Campen and his men, it were not to be expected that they should elude its pursuit. The Indians crept along the path that had been taken, and by the morning light, concealed by the bushes, approached very near to

the sentries, and burst so unexpectedly upon these, that they had only time to run to the camp, crying, "The Indian, the Indian," before the savages were in their midst, with the tomahawk and scalping knife. Van Campen and his men started upon their feet and in a moment were ready for action. The enemy had a warm reception. The combat was at first, from hand to hand, and so well sustained was the resistance that the Indians were obliged to retire ; but they came up on all sides, and one after another Van Campen's men were cut down with the rifle. Perceiving that the party of warriors was so large as to offer them no hope of escape, and beholding their number every moment growing smaller, they determined, though reluctantly, to surrender themselves to the enemy, under the belief that their lives would be spared. The Indians were commanded by a Lieut. Nellis, who was in the British service, and often led the savages in their descent upon the frontier settlements. To him they made their surrender ; nine of their number had been killed, several were wounded and three in the early part of the action, effected their escape.

The Indians, thus becoming masters of the ground, came up and took possession of the prisoners and their arms, after which they began to dispatch those that had been wounded. Two of Van Campen's men, Wallace and Stewart, were killed with the tomahawk, immediately before him. Another by the name of Craton, was placed on a large stone, and as he sat bending over half unconscious of what was transpiring around him, was made the mark of four or five

savages, who took their position a few rods from him, and all aiming their rifles at his head, fired at once, and with their balls tore the top of his skull from his head. Poor Craton fell over, and his brains rolled out and lay smoking upon the ground.

The blood coursed quick through Van Campen's veins as he saw his brave soldiers treated thus, and it was not the least of his suffering, to be obliged to witness the scene, without the means in his power of affording them aid. He was obliged to stand as insensible as a rock, for had he shown the least signs of sympathy or disapproval, it would have been at the peril of his life. Himself, and his men that were not wounded were taken into the custody of Indian warriors, and one of them had tied a cord around his arm, and stood holding it, while the executioners were dispatching those that had been hurt in the battle. Near him, stood one of his men who had received a shot through his arm when raised in the attitude of firing; the ball having entered his elbow, had passed up his arm, and gone out near his shoulder blade. His name was Burwell. Van Campen seeing him, spoke and said, "Burwell, you are losing blood pretty fast,—are you not?" "Yes," said he, "I can't hold out much longer." "Stand as long as you can, my brave fellow, your wound is such that if they pass you by now, they may perhaps spare your life."

Just then an executioner saw that one more remained to finish his duty, and he came up towards Burwell, with the tomahawk raised to strike him in the head. Van Campen perceiving this movement,

jerked from the warrior who was holding him by the arm, sprang forward with his right hand clenched, and gave the Indian executioner a blow in the breast, which sent him reeling backward, until he fell upon the ground, like one dead. The warriors then turned with their hatchets upon Van Campen. But a part who had witnessed the scene were highly pleased with the bravery that had been shown by their prisoner, and as the tomahawk was gleaming over his head, they leaped forward to rescue him from death. For a few moments, Van Campen could hear nothing but the clashing of tomahawks as the warriors engaged in a fierce struggle for his life. He was pushed about in the scuffle, a part of the time, his body bent over, by those who endeavored to shield him from the threatened blow, expecting every moment to have the hatchet enter his head. But at length the fortune of the contest turned in his favor, the majority being determined to spare his life. When the strife ceased, they gathered around him with looks of exultation and delight, and he could discover, from the pleasure which beamed from their every look, that his life would be protected from any further injury. This well timed blow was the means of sparing Burwell from falling under the hatchet of the executioner, for as they came around Van Campen repeating one after another, "Brave warrior, brave warrior," they seemed by common consent, to yield the life of the one, as a tribute to the noble deed of the other.

This instance of generosity in the savage warrior, is enough to give him some claim to indulgence,



ere we pronounce upon him an unqualified censure.— The blow that had been given to their executioner in the discharge of his duty might have been construed into an insult. It was so well directed and powerful, that he lay upon the ground a few moments, gasping for breath ; but admiring bravery even in an enemy, they would not allow Van Campen to be injured for the protection he had given to one of his soldiers. It is but just to remark that if the Indians deserve rebuke for the excessive cruelty they sometimes practice in war, they at the same time possess other traits of character, which can but win for them the highest admiration. That so many virtues should appear prominent in the midst of a multitude of vices, that a noble generosity should be brought into close alliance with a blood-thirsty spirit of revenge, and that kindness should burst forth from the breast of cruelty, are incongruities so strangely and wonderfully combined in the Indian character, that we are led to view it almost as we would a verdant mead, which breaks upon the eye, in the midst of a barren and desolate soil ; the strength of the contrast imparts a beauty to the scene, which is not really its own, and we are willing to excuse the sterility of the surrounding land, because of the surprising beauty that comes in to relieve it from an entire waste.

Immediately after this struggle for Van Campen's life, the prisoners were stripped of all their clothing except pantaloons, and taken a short distance from the battle ground, where they were made to sit down in the form of a circle while the Indians made a larger one

around them and bringing up five Indians, who had been killed during the engagement, laid them down near the prisoners. In their movements they observed the stillness and solemnity of death, and as the captives eyed their motions and beheld the dead warriors stretched out before them, they felt that the ceremonies that were in progress, deeply concerned themselves. And though their minds had in a measure become callous to the thoughts of death, by familiarity with the field of strife, still the voice of silence whispered even into their ears, lessons of the tomb which they could not help but regard. Under the present circumstances it was very natural for the prisoners to turn from the slaughtered warriors to themselves, and each one began to reflect upon the destiny which should await him. Van Campen anticipated little short of a cruel and lingering death, especially if he was discovered to be the one who had killed so many Indians, while effecting his escape in the year '80.

When every thing was arranged, and the warriors were standing in a large circle around the prisoners and the slain, an Indian chief came forward into the ring, and commenced making a speech. Every eye was turned upon the speaker, and as he advanced, Van Campen watched the countenances of the Indians, and could see them alternately swell with rage, and with the stern and awful looks of revenge, and then melt away with the voice of the orator, into expressions of pity and compassion. He said to his men in a low tone of voice, that their fate would probably be decided by the speech of the warrior, and that they had better

prepare themselves for the last extremity. Said he—“If the conclusion is unfavorable, it can be but death at any rate, and we had better part with our lives as dearly as possible. Let us fix upon the weakest point of their line, and if we are condemned to die, let us run upon it with all our might, snatch their weapons from them and engage from hand to hand ; it may be that some of us will be able to effect our escape during the struggle.” He kept his eye upon the speaker, and carefully watched the effect of his words until he was through, and happily for them, his conclusion was brightened by a smile, which was the token of mercy. There was left no ill boding cloud behind to warn them of coming evil.

Directly after, the Indians proceeded to bury those who had fallen in battle, which they did by rolling an old log from its place and laying the body in the hollow thus made, and then heaping upon it a little earth. They then divided the prisoners among them according to the number of their fires, Van Campen being placed with the party which encamped with Lieut. Nellis, who having the first choice of prisoners, chose him because he was an officer. From him he learned the substance of the warrior's speech, who, as he said, had been consulting the Great Spirit as to what should be done with those that had fallen into their hands. He presented arguments on the one hand, to show that the prisoners should be immediately killed, and again he proceeded to remark that they should be treated with lenity. At one time, pointing to the lifeless bodies before him, he exclaimed, “These call for vengeance, the blood of the

red man has been spilled, and that of the white man must flow." Yet he represented again that enough blood had been shed, that vengeance had been taken in those of their enemies that had been killed, and that such of their own party, as had fallen, met only the common fate of war. He suggested finally, that the lives of the prisoners should be spared, and they, adopted into the families of those that had been slain.

In accordance with this recommendation the prisoners were unharmed, and put in readiness to march with the Indians. Packs were prepared for them and having shouldered these, they began to march towards the place where the warriors had first seen the marks which led them in pursuit, and having reached this they entered their little bark canoes, rowed across the river and sent them adrift down the stream.

The Indians then took up their line of march back to Niagara, proceeding up the valley of the Susquehanna and its tributary streams. On the morning of the second day of their march, as Van Campen passed by one of their fires, he saw one of his soldiers named Henderson, seated upon a billet of wood, and two Indians standing by his side. His countenance was sad and pale, indicating the presence of anxious and painful thoughts. He had been wounded in the battle, by a ball which struck his left hand, as it was raised for the purpose of firing, and cut off four of his fingers. Van Campen supposing that the fate of this soldier had been decided, beheld him with mingled pity and concern; yet there was no remedy, and he passed on, bearing his mournful countenance before him. He

did not go far before he heard a noise like the scound of a tomahawk entering the head, and in a few moments saw the two Indians, who had been standing by Henderson, run along by bearing a scalp, and carrying a hatchet dripping with blood. The sight filled him with maddening thoughts, yet he did not reveal his emotions, by action or look, but continued to march on reckless of every event that should befall him.

Their march during the day was continued without provisions, till they arrived at Pine Creek, where they halted while the Indian hunters went out in pursuit of game. In a short time they returned, bringing along a noble elk. This was soon dressed and prepared for roasting. The prisoners were allowed the same liberty that was taken by the warriors themselves; they cut from the animal as much fresh meat as they wished, and roasted it on the coals, or held it on the end of a sharpened stick to the fire. This made them an excellent supper, and was quite a relief to their keen appetites.

Burwell, whose life had been spared, marched with the Indians as a prisoner; but his wound in a few days became very much inflamed and painful to such a degree, that it was with great difficulty he proceeded on his march; and though he promised to give them trouble, they did not seek to rid themselves of his care in the summary manner in which they generally treated their wounded prisoners, but exercised their skill to restore him to health and soundness. Having collected a parcel of suitable herbs, they boiled them in water thus making a strong decoction, in which they dipped the feather of a quill, and ran it through his



wound. Whenever this was done, Van Campen, who had been quartered with a different company, was brought to see the attention which was given to his soldier,—a very simple but flattering token of the respect they paid to his bravery. The operation was exceedingly painful, and as Van Campen stood by, he encouraged him to bear up bravely under his treatment, saying that he must prove himself a man, and that, if he suffered the keenest anguish, he should not manifest it by a single sign. The Indians, who were by, seemed to understand the instructions that were given, and were highly pleased with them as well as the manner in which the soldier endured the pain. In a short time the inflammation was removed, and the wound healed under this harsh but salutary treatment.

Burwell lived to enjoy many a pleasant day after the revolution, yet whenever he has told the story of the blow which Van Campen gave to the Indian executioner whose hatchet was raised to destroy his, life, and when he has described the fierce and doubtful struggle that followed, it has always been with tears in his eyes. Several years since, he paid Mr. Van Campen a visit at his residence in Angelica, saying that he was about to remove to one of the Southern States, and that he had come to see, once more, the man who had saved his life at the risk of his own. He paid him an affectionate and grateful farewell, and since then Mr. Van Campen has not heard from him, and in all probability, he is now numbered with the departed sons of the revolution.

Upon starting on their march, the remains of the elk were divided among the warriors and prisoners, each carrying his portion as a supply against further need. Pursuing up the valley, they soon came to the head of Pine Creek, thence striking across the country, they reached in half a day's travel, the head waters of the Genesee river, and, in a journey of two days down this stream, came to a place called Pigeon Woods, where a great number of Indian families, old and young, had come to catch pigeons, which were found here in great abundance, and were important as one of their principal means of living. They here met with about forty warriors, who were on their way to the frontier settlements, and their encampment was not far distant from that of the returning party. Some of the warriors from the advancing party, came from their quarters to hold a consultation with those who had Van Campen in charge, and he soon perceived from the glances that were every now and then bestowed upon him, that he was the subject of their conversation. In this he was not mistaken, for they very soon came up to him, and giving him a tap on the shoulder, said, "*jeggo.*" (*march.*) In obedience to this order, he arose and went with them, and in their path came to a deep ravine, which lay between the two camps. It was crossed by a tree which had been made to fall so that the ends rested upon each side of the gulf leaving a deep and dangerous chasm beneath. As the Indians came upon this with their prisoner, they began to jostle him and shake the log, at the same time expressing great delight with the ease in which they could dance over the huge

rocks that were lying many feet below them. Had Van Campen been a novice in such a situation, he would certainly have fallen into the deep gulf beneath. But he was as well acquainted as they, with a path like this, and as he tripped along over, himself joining in the motion of their slender bridge, the savages were rather pleased than otherwise, with the manifest dexterity of their prisoner.

Upon coming up to the warriors, Van Campen was made to sit upon one side of the fire, where he could be seen by all, who wished to gratify their pride or curiosity in beholding him as a trophy of their artful warfare. But he was no less curious than they, in surveying the forms which met his eye, for he was interested in knowing whether, among those that were before him, there could be found the Indian with whom he had a severe encounter, when making his escape from captivity. Yet he no where saw any thing of the warrior Mohawk, and began to feel a little more at his ease.

On either side of him there was a row of cabins extending about fifty feet, in a line with each other, and were so formed as to present an open front to the fire. They were constructed by driving crotches into the ground and laying poles upon them, which served to support slabs of bark, one end of which rested on these, and the other on the ground, forming at the same time both covering and sides. The two rows faced each other, and a long fire was made between them. While Van Campen was sitting by the side of this, with his eyes directed to the scene around him,

the warriors were in earnest consultation, the subject of which he supposed to be concerning himself. They were conversing together in a group not far distant, and presently the crowd opened, and a figure of noble proportions came towards him. He was an Indian in dress and color, but these were all that gave him claim to be a savage warrior. He came to Van Campen and commenced examining him concerning the condition of that part of the frontier, from which he had been taken. He enquired concerning the number and condition of the inhabitants, the manner in which they were defended, and about the number and vigilance of their scouts. To all these questions he gave a correct answer, except to the one respecting the strength of the force by which they were guarded; this he represented as being much greater than it really was, to discourage them if possible, from visiting the frontier. He said that the country about Northumberland, was very strongly garrisoned with troops, and that large scouts were sent in every direction, for the purpose of waylaying and discovering the Indians who might be sent against them. He was next directed to mark out with a coal, upon a bark, the course of the streams emptying into the Susquehanna, the situation of the forts and the path pursued by the scouts. In marking down the course of the streams and the situation of the forts, he observed the accuracy of truth, for the Indians were as well acquainted as himself with these, and his exactness in this, would lead them to give the more credit to that part of his story in which he designed to exaggerate. He executed his work

promptly and truly, showing them on his little bark map, the situation of the forts, and the route pursued by the scouting parties, but gave them a very enlarged idea of the number of soldiers and of the preparation of the settlers to receive an attack. This part of his story produced the desired effect; the Indians did not, in this incursion, go into the neighborhood of Northumberland, but invaded another portion of territory which they supposed to be less guarded.

Immediately after this examination, the Indian interpreter by whom he had been questioned, came up to him and said in rather a low tone of voice,—“There is only one besides myself in this company that knows any thing about you.” Van Campen replied rather sternly, “And what do you know of me, sir?” “Why,” said he, “you are the man who killed the Indians.”—Van Campen’s thoughts were then turned to the fire and the tomahawk, supposing that since he was known, he would certainly fall a victim to savage barbarity. He enquired the name of him who was standing by his side, and was answered that it was Jones, and that he might be assured of his friendship, for he too, was a prisoner, as well as himself. Van Campen then began to take a little more courage, and as Jones proceeded to give him assurances of secrecy, and promised to exert his utmost influence to have him pass through to Niagara in safety, he began to feel himself in the presence of a friend in whom he could repose the utmost confidence. Jones said to him, that if he could pass through to Niagara undiscovered, he would then be safe, but if the Indians discovered who he was,



they would certainly put him to death in a cruel manner, for they had been informed concerning him, by the Tories, and they need only learn his name, to make his life atone for his activity and success in savage warfare.

The other one who was acquainted with the history of Van Campen, was a Dutchman by the name of Houser, and to him Jones immediately repaired to enjoin upon him the utmost secrecy. Upon coming to him, he found him talking aloud to himself in the most ungarded manner, and swearing about "*Van Camp, vot kilt de Enchens. He's come among us and ve'll all be burnt, every tarn bugger of us; yes ve vill, duts vot oney way.*"

"Tut, tut," said Jones, in a low voice, "what's the matter Houser?"

"*Vy, Van Camp's here, vot kilt de Enchens, un ve'll all be burnt to de stake, so sure as mine gun's a fire-lock, oney way.*"

"Stop, stop, continued Jones, "how do you know that he killed the Indians?" To this he answered, that Elisha Hunt, one of Van Campen's men, had just told him. "Well," said Jones, "if any one asks you about this, you must tell them that you know nothing of it—you must lie like the deuce, and *swear to it too.*" By this timely injunction, the report was prevented from being spread farther, and the Indians were kept ignorant of circumstances that would have inevitably resulted in the death of Van Campen.

Mr. Van Campen has ever since regarded this act of kindness, which was shown him by Capt. Jones, as the

only means which spared him his life at this period ; and so strong was the friendship which they then contracted for each other, and so intimate has been their acquaintance since, that we cannot pass without giving him a short biographical sketch, which we are enabled to do, by a communication from a near relative of Mr. Jones.

Capt. Horatio Jones was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, Nov. 19th 1763. When quite young he removed with his parents to Bedford County of the same State, and, at the early age of sixteen, enlisted as a volunteer, under Capt. John Boyd. It was when the Indians, led on by the notorious Butler, Brant and Nellis, were committing their atrocious massacres among the<sup>e</sup> settlers of the frontier, sparing neither age nor sex from the tomahawk and scalping knife. While yet in boyhood he was an active and brave soldier, and accompanied Capt. Boyd on many important and dangerous expeditions, in which himself and commander had the good fortune to escape unhurt.

At length in the spring of '81 while Capt. Boyd and his men, numbering thirty-two, were in pursuit of Nellis, they were surprised by a large party of Indians, who killed about one half of them and took eight prisoners, among whom was Mr. Jones and his commanding officer. They were brought to the Indian towns in the valley of the Genesee, and there made to run the gauntlet, after which, they came very near losing their lives in a savage frolic. The warriors, upon returning from their excursion, gave themselves up to drinking and merriment. Partaking

freely of spirits, they became intoxicated and all the hidden ferocity of their natures, began to be aroused. They tomahawked one of the prisoners, severed his head from his body, and sticking it upon the end of a pole, carried it around with wild and frantic yells.— They next meditated the death of Boyd and Jones, and while they were disputing about the manner in which they would make them suffer; a few squaws conveyed these two prisoners away and secreted them until the passion of the warriors had subsided. Their lives were thus spared, and Jones was subsequently adopted into an indian family, and was their interpreter when Mr. Van Campen met with him at Pigeon Woods. He was retained as a captive until after the treaty of 1784, when he was appointed by General Washington, interpreter of the Six Nations, the duties of which office he continued to discharge until within a few years of his death, which took place at his residence in Geneseo, on the 18th of August 1826.

Mr. Jones was of about the ordinary stature, firmly built, and from his nature, fitted to throw energy and decision into every act of his life. By his bravery, physical strength, and the manly traits of his character, he gained great influence over the Indians with whom he was associated, and having their entire confidence, was enabled to render the government an invaluable service in her treaties with the northern and western tribes. He was the favorite interpreter of the celebrated Red Jacket, and his style on all occasions was said to be chaste, graphic and energetic. During the latter part of his life, Mr. Van Campen and he were

in the habit of visiting each other once every year, and never did two old patriots enjoy themselves together more perfectly than they. He descended to the grave full of years, and with the proud consciousness of having served well, the generation in which he lived.

✱ We will return to our narrative. After spending two days at Pigeon Woods, the Indians took with them a supply of provisions and continued their march down the Genesee river till they came to a place called Canneadea, which was the first village on their route. Upon coming within two or three miles of this, they began to raise the war-whoop, and as they drew near they made the air ring continually with their shouts. These were heard by the inhabitants of the village, who, warned by this means of the return of a victorious party of warriors, hastened forth, both old and young, to give them a joyful reception. They met each other with shouts of congratulation, and as the inhabitants came up, the warriors halted to give the others an opportunity of learning the result of the campaign. The villagers then went around among them to look after the spoils, but their chief attention was directed in search of those who had been taken prisoners. They were interested in finding these, for the purpose of making them run the gauntlet, a trial which the American aborigines were in the habit of exacting from the prisoners that were returned by a war party to any of their camps or villages.

This ceremony was well suited to gratify a savage taste, for it often placed the subject in circumstances of extreme danger, as well as pain. It afforded them

an opportunity to gratify any private pique or animosity, by inflicting the severest blows upon the prisoner and subjecting him, it might be, to the loss of life. Yet it was not always a scene of cruelty, but was often made the source of high amusement to the Indians, without causing any great suffering to the captive. The prisoner was obliged to run the distance of some thirty or forty yards, to a point fixed upon as the termination of his race, between two parallel lines of people—men, women and children—armed with hatchets, knives, sticks and other offensive weapons, and in passing through, they were at liberty to strike as often and as severely as they pleased, until he arrived at the end of his course, where all their fury was made to cease, and the victim was considered safe from any further injury until his case should receive a final decision.\* Much of his success depended upon the manner in which the prisoner conducted himself before the warriors.—Should he present a fearless, independent spirit, it might perhaps win for him the admiration of his captors, and they would allow him to pass unharmed. But should he appear cowardly and timid, he would be most surely treated with the utmost severity.

It was to this trying ordeal that Van Campen and the few that were with him had now come ; and as the villagers came in among the warriors, they pushed the prisoners around as though they were the most worth-

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\*Stone's life of Brant.



less kind of baggage,—led them out in front of the warriors, and then prepared to put to the test their nimbleness of foot. The apparent satisfaction with which they were received, both by old and young, assured Van Campen that the time, so much dreaded by the prisoners, had now arrived, and that he must be subjected to the trial of a scene which was justly regarded with apprehension. The Indian ladies were furnished with long whips, and as they stood lightly tapping them on the ground, it was certain that they were designing to use them upon other backs than those of their own truant offspring.

Van Campen was placed in front of the other prisoners, all of whom stood a short distance before the warriors. Thus stationed, every thing was put in readiness for them to run, whenever the word should be given. The warriors themselves took no active part, but remained spectators of the scene, while the villagers formed themselves on the sides, and their swiftest runners in the rear of the prisoners.

While Van Campen was standing in front of his men, he amused himself by observing the movements of those around him. He could see his fellow prisoners, straightening their muscles and nerving themselves for a vigorous effort, with their attention directed at one time to the ground that stretched out before them, at another to the forms and limbs of those by whom they were to be pursued. The Indians did not, form themselves in lines parallel with the course he was to run, neither were they armed with weapons any more formidable than the cudgel and

the whip. Having furnished themselves with these the young Indians and squaws arranged themselves, and awaited with an impatient zeal, the time when they should bring them into requisition. Before the word was given for them to start, Nellis came to Van Campen, and pointing to the council house, which was about forty rods distant, said—"Yonder is the place you are to reach in your race, if you can get there without a whipping you will be safe,—look out for your heels and if you ever made them fly put them through now." Just before the word was given, Van Campen saw two young squaws, who appeared to have been left behind, coming along from the village very leisurely, to join the sport. They had their whips in their hands and having come about half way from the council house, to the warriors, stood still with their whips raised, and awaited the coming of the prisoners. Presently the word "joggo" was given, and the captives sprang forward to the race.—The Indian whippers, started at the same time, with a bound, and made the utmost exertion to reach them with the lash. Van Campen had not yet received a single blow, and was drawing near, in his rapid flight, to the two young squaws who had their whips raised, ready to strike, and he did not expect to pass them without suffering the weight of their descending arms. Just before he reached them, the thought struck him, and as quick as lightning he gave a spring, and raised his feet, which hit them in the breast, and sent them, as if by a whirlwind, in the same direction in which he was running. They all came down togeth-

er, tumbling heels over head, and Van Campen found himself between the two squaws, who were kicking and squabbling about, endeavoring to gain a more favorable position, yet he did not wait to help the ladies up, but sprang upon his feet, and made good his race.

The warriors who were spectators of this scene, beheld it with the utmost delight. Their eyes had been intently fixed upon the runners, and as they saw Van Campen draw near the two squaws, they were interested with their success in giving him the lash. But when they saw him spring and take them along with him, and as they beheld them all thrown together in a heap, they were filled with merriment and made the air ring with shouts of laughter. Some threw themselves upon the ground, and rolled and laughed, as though they were ready to burst, and long and loud was their enjoyment of this little maneuver. The prisoners by means of this diversion had all of them an easy race, arriving safely at the end of their course. Immediately after, several of the young warriors, who were exceedingly diverted with the manner in which Van Campen had cleared himself, came up to him and patted him on the shoulder saying "*Shenawana*"—*Cajena*"—*brave man—good fellow*. The whole party soon came up to the council house and the prisoners were then quartered with the families of the warriors.

Directly after, Van Campen was introduced to the father of the young Nellis, by whom he had been taken. He had formerly lived in the valley of the Mohawk, but had joined the British as a refugee and had receiv-

ed the office of Captain in the Indian Department.—His son was a Lieutenant in the same service. When young Nellis led Van Campen forward, he addressed his father thus—"I will make you acquainted with one who fought me manfully, and who, if we had been equally manned, would have beaten me, but as my party was the strongest, I overcame him. Since he has been a prisoner he has conducted himself like a gentleman, and I wish that he may be treated as one, so long as he continues with us."

The old Captain bowed and scraped and made a variety of very awkward motions, in attempting to show himself extremely polite, and taking Van Campen by the hand, expressed great satisfaction at the pleasure of seeing him. Van Campen returned the compliment as well as he could, yet if he had made known the true feelings of his heart, he would not probably have said, that it was with any great feelings of joy that, as a prisoner, he clasped the hand of a British officer. He was invited to sit, and after conversing for a while upon the common topics of the day, arose to depart, when the old gentleman requested his presence at the dinner table, on the morrow, at twelve. Signifying his assent, Van Campen returned with Lieut. Nellis to their Indian quarters.

The fatigues of the campaign were such that both warriors and prisoners spent the first day and night after their arrival, as a season of repose. The relaxation was grateful to their wearied limbs, and with invigorated spirits, Van Campen and Lieut Nellis repaired to the old Captain's dwelling, to fulfil

the engagement they had made on the day before. While on their way Van Campen enquired of Nellis, if his father had a wife ; to which he was answered, "Yes." He immediately began to imagine the kind of lady that would soon greet his presence, and concluded that in the wife of a British Captain, he would see a woman of fashion in her satin or silk.

Upon entering the house and paying his respects to Capt. Nellis, his eyes wandered about in search of his anticipated hostess ;—yet he saw no one that could answer his ideal picture. The only female in the room was an old squaw, who was sitting in one corner of the cabin, having a broad face, high cheek bones, and in every respect very ill featured—this certainly could not be the fancied lady, and he dismissed his curiosity for a time, supposing that the Captain's wife would probably make her appearance soon. His attention was next drawn to the dining table. It was one of a truly primitive style, being formed of a plank that had been hewn out of a large log and was supported by the trunks of four young saplings that were cut the proper length and driven into holes that had been bored in the plank. It was relieved by no covering and the only dishes that appeared upon it were one large wooden bowl, and a few plates of the same material. Soon the old squaw served up the dinner in the large bowl, their meal consisting of a goodly supply of pigeons and Indian dumplings. These were smoking on the table, and their host observed—"Come, gentlemen, draw up and we'll take our dinners." They drew up their chairs to the board



leaving the squaw sitting in one corner by the fire, with her back partly turned towards them, and as the old gentleman took his seat he spoke to her and said, "Come, my dear, wont you sit at the table with us?" The dusky lady obeyed the request of her lord, and drawing up her chair placed it very near his, and sat in motionless silence. Van Campen then began to think seriously that she must be the mistress of the house, and as the dinner was served out to each one, he amused himself very much with his situation.

He thought that the scene before him would make a fine study for a painter, and his highest wish would have been gratified, could his friends at home have been apprised of the company in which he was placed. It was as motley an assemblage as was ever, perhaps, brought around one board,—there was a Tory Captain, a Tory Lieutenant, a rebel officer, and an old squaw,—a rare party even for those times that were rich in every variety of incident.

Mr. Van Campen was well pleased with his entertainment and was afterwards informed that the warriors were going to spend the evening in dancing and that they expected him to take a part, that he might thus become acquainted with some of the Indian customs. But his only articles of dress were a pair of pantaloons that were left on him at the time of his capture, and an old blanket that was given him during his march, to protect his arms and shoulders from the brush and briers through which they were obliged to pass. Nellis had the kindness to add to his wardrobe a calico shirt and a blanket, which was rather more

respectable in its appearance than the one he wore, and with these he was quite well prepared to take his place among the dancers.

The signal for assembling the warriors, and for commencing the ceremonies, was given at evening. It was the wild and romantic whoop, and as it was heard echoing along the little huts of their village, and penetrating the dark bosom of the surrounding forest, the old and young, the warrior and the prisoner, started out from their places and came together upon a level plot of ground, where a few bright fires were sending up a clear and steady blaze into the still air of night. Around these the dancers paraded with light and airy tread, to make their arrangements for the evening's entertainment, which they determined to open with the war-dance. In this, Van Campen took no part; it was performed chiefly by the warriors.

The war-dance is a sort of pantomime, in which the Indians represent all the maneuvers to which they are accustomed in the field of strife. They begin with the song of exultation, and in their movement represent the delight with which they go forth to meet their foes. Their singing and action, for a time illustrate their march to the battle ground. As they draw near the enemy, the song seems to die away,—they become sly and cautious in their movements, some perhaps will shelter themselves behind trees; others will form an ambuscade under the cover of bushes, while a third party is creeping along, carrying the rifle in trail, or bearing the hatchet,

and as they draw near some post or stump, which may represent the object upon which they mean to vent their rage, they rise upon it with all the fury of assailants, and having applied the tomahawk, or discharged the gun, they imagine their victim slain, and perform the ceremony of taking the scalp. The tune and the movement are then changed; the song becomes one of triumph mingled with the loud yell and the exulting bound of victory. But should they encounter defeat, or should any of their numbers be slain, their melody would assume a subdued and melancholy tone, and in their cries for the loss of friends, the shout of victory would be changed to the *death-yell*. By this means the young are instructed in their mode of warfare, and as its mimic cruelties are brought into scenes of pleasure, they are suited to make them cherish an early passion for the field of conflict.

This was followed by the Turtle dance, so called perhaps from the manner in which the music, by which they timed their movements, was made. Two Indians spread upon the ground a couple of deer skins, on which they seated themselves, each holding in the hands a box made of the turtle shell, which enclosed several kernels of corn. They shook these and made them rattle so as to chime with a tune, which they began to sing in a low voice, as a signal for the dance to commence. It was opened by an aged Indian, who came slowly forward, and as he advanced into the open space, joined with a low hum in the tune that was singing, and began to dance, making the movements

principally on his heels. The next one that came forward was an elderly looking squaw, she had her blanket drawn partly over her head, and commenced dancing with a great deal of modesty, her movements being much less violent than those of the Indian who preceded her. Others followed on after them promiscuously, forming themselves into a ring, with their heads most of the time facing the center. Soon the greater part had taken their places in the dance, and as they began to move towards it from the place where Van Campen was sitting, a young warrior who was by him and who could speak English, remarked that it would soon be his turn to take a place with the dancers.

Van Campen replied that in his country the young men always had girls to dance with them.

"Do you want a girl?" the young warrior replied.

"Yes," said he, "I wish to dance in proper style."

The young Indian then left him, and in a few moments returned leading forward a beautiful young squaw. Van Campen was somewhat at a loss at first as to what attention he could pay to an Indian lady, yet as she had been brought at his request, he showed her all the politeness in his power, leading her forward to the dance, where they joined with the movements of the rest, who one time observed a very steady motion on their heels, then wheeled around, all the while humming the tune which was sung by the musicians, accompanied by the regular beat of the turtle shells.

Van Campen and his partner continued to dance together for sometime, in silence, except as they would

now and then join in a low voice, with the notes of their music. At length as they were whirling around he happened to throw his arm around the neck of the Indian lady, and the wind at the same time blowing up, threw his blanket partly over her head and face. The young squaw, unaccustomed to any extra display of politeness, and seemingly frightened, gave a slight scream and darted from him, leaving him to dance alone.

On the next day the warriors, with their prisoners, took up their line of march, following a path which led to some Indian settlements on Buffalo Creek, and after a journey of about two days along this stream encamped at its mouth. Here they met with a Captain Hilyer and Lieutenant Doxstadter, who had charge of the British stores, sent to this place for the supply of their troops. They hailed the arrival of this body of warriors with demonstrations of joy. Nellis presented Van Campen to them, as an officer whom he had taken, and they, immediately bringing forward wine upon an old oaken table, which was standing in their room, invited him to join them in a social glass. Van Campen declined, saying that they would probably propose toasts which his principles would not allow him to reciprocate, and he therefore begged to be excused. They urged him however to become one of their party, saying that after a fatiguing march through the woods, a little wine could not be otherwise than refreshing, and Doxstadter pledged his honor that no toasts should be given which would be in the least offensive to his feelings. To this the others agreed, and he took a seat with them at the table.



They drank first to each other and next to the health and prosperity of their friends at home, which passed without the slightest objection. Others were given of very much the same character, and every thing seemed to promise the greatest harmony of feeling. But as they continued to drink, their spirits began to rise, and Doxstadter, glowing at length with unusual warmth proposed a "Health to King George and damnation to his foes." The company drank except Van Campen, who brought down his hand so heavily upon the table as to break his glass.

Nellis immediately accused Doxstadter of forfeiting his honor, upon which many harsh and abusive expressions followed; one accusing the other of taking the rebel's part, and the other replying that the principles of honor were the same whether exercised towards a prisoner, or a fellow officer, and that he felt himself bound to regard the rights of one who had unfortunately been thrown under his protection. They were sitting on different sides of the table, Doxstadter with his back to the fire-place, by the side of which was a little pen filled with ashes. Becoming considerably excited they both rose upon their feet, and Doxstadter giving Nellis the lie, was answered by a blow, which was so well directed and powerful that it threw him backwards, and his feet catching against a bench, tumbled him heels over head into the ash-bed. He came out with his scarlet coat looking as though he had been in a meal chest, and he flew at Nellis more en-furiated than ever. The latter warded him off as well as he could and watching his opportunity, whispered to Van

Campan, telling him that he had better withdraw, for, as the Indians were beginning to come up, his antagonist who had great influence with them, might engage one of them to thrust him through. He therefore left the ground and the quarrel ended, as he afterwards learned, with a challenge which was accepted by Nellis, to fight a duel on the following morning.

Morning came, but Doxstadter not appearing to fulfill his engagement, Nellis marched on with his warriors to Fort Niagara, where he arrived in safety and gave up his prisoners into the hands of the British.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Continuation of the year 1782. Van Campen is adopted into the family of Col. Butler—The Indians make a discovery—Seek to obtain possession of him—He is sent to Montreal—Scenes in prison—Sent to New York and returns to his friends on parole.*

Upon arriving safely at Fort Niagara, Van Campen could with pleasure reflect that he had passed through the Indian territory, and had not been discovered as the one who had before escaped from captivity. He hoped now to be delivered into the hands of the British, and when once their prisoner, he supposed himself safe, even though the Indians should afterwards learn that he had been within their power. He was conducted into a long council hall, on each side of which were benches extending the whole length, and upon these the warriors with their prisoners, sat down, and awaited the arrival of some of the British officers. Soon one of them appeared and his name passed along the ranks of the Indian warriors—Col. Butler, and as Van Campen was informed that they were about to go through the ceremony of adopting him into the Colonel's family, he began to congratulate himself upon the security he could now feel; for his life would no longer hang upon the slight tenure of Indian caprice, or favor, but he would now probably be detained as a prisoner, until an exchange should

take place between American and British captives. We will relate the ceremony of his adoption.

Col. Butler and his party stood on one side of the council house ; the Indian warriors, and prisoners on the other, when the chief warrior stepped forward a little in front of his men and made a speech. As this was given in the Indian language, Van Campen did not understand its import, yet there was something in the manner and voice of the warrior, which chained his attention, and led him strictly to observe all of his movements. After speaking awhile he went across the room, took Col. Butler by the hand and made him a short address, then retiring a little, he lighted a pipe and began to smoke. This was so constructed as to serve the double purpose of a pipe and hatchet, the bowl being attached to the eye, and the handle being so formed as to admit the smoke to pass through to the end, which was taken into the mouth. After smoking, the warrior made another speech and then conducting Van Campen across the room, placed his hand in Col. Butler's, and after briefly addressing him, led Van Campen again to his seat among the warriors. Butler and the Indian chief then took their pipes and smoked again, after which, the chief presented Butler with a large belt, called the *wampum* belt, and returned to his place and continued his harrangue. When he had finished this, Butler conducted Van Campen to his side of the room, where pipes were given them and they smoked together as the Col. and Indian chief had done before. After smoking, Butler informed him that he had adopted him into his family to make good the

loss of his son who had been killed by the rebels on the waters of the Mohawk, and that he would have to be conducted to the British guard-house.

Van Campen immediately replied—"My dear sir, if I have been adopted into your family, I trust you will not disgrace me so much as to place me under a British guard."

The Colonel seemed to be pleased with the reply, and remarked that he would give him a more pleasant situation, and accordingly gave him a very respectable room, that was occupied by a physician, named Stewart, in whom Van Campen found a very agreeable companion. He had not been long, however, at his new quarters before the Indians received the intelligence that he was the very same person who had killed a small party of warriors in the year 1789.

Not long after the party of warriors had left Pigeon Woods, where Van Campen was examined by the Indian Interpreter, Jones, Mohawk himself came in and informed the warriors who still remained at that place, that Van Campen from whom he had once but just escaped with his life, had passed through as a prisoner, with the war-party that had gone to Niagara. He then showed them the scar, which he bore on the back of his neck, saying—"This was made by his tomahawk." Their eyes were immediately lighted up with revenge, and they brought forward their interpreter and began to inquire—"Did you not know that it was Van Campen whom you examined?"

Jones with his usual adroitness replied—"How should I know? Here I have been with you, going



on two years—and how could I tell any better than you, who Van Campen was? But besides, do you want me to lie? If I had known him do you suppose I would now tell you, and have you kill me?"

Jones was a universal favorite with the Indians, and the bold, collected manner in which he spoke, allayed their suspicions and he was suffered to pass without being questioned further.

The news was soon carried to the Indians at Niagara, that Van Campen had been their prisoner, and, anxious to avenge the death of their countrymen, went to Col. Butler and informed him of the circumstances which they had heard, and demanded that their prisoner should be surrendered up to them. He put them off for a time by saying that he would examine the case and let them know in a few days what should be done.

But they were not to be driven from their purpose; they urged their request with renewed ardor, demanding the surrender of Van Campen, and promising in his place, fourteen other prisoners. So earnest were their petitions that Col. Butler was induced to send the Adjutant of his regiment to make inquiries of his prisoner in reference to the charges brought against him, and from him Van Campen learned the critical situation in which he was placed. After informing him of the accusations which had been brought against him, and of the desire of the Indians to obtain satisfaction for the number, supposed to have been slain by his hand, he asked him whether the reports were true,—whether he was indeed the person, who had been taken

prisoner, and had effected his escape, by destroying the Indians, who had taken him in the year '80.

Van Campen replied that for one placed in his circumstances, this was a very serious question to answer.

The Adjutant enquired further—"Were you brought into Niagara as a prisoner?"

Van Campen said—"No."

"Did you escape and run away from the Indian warriors?"

"No sir, they *ran away from me*."

Not wishing to equivocate further, Van Campen replied—"Why, sir, I never am accustomed to deny the truth, and if your Colonel is so very anxious to know about this, he can. I was taken prisoner by the Indians, in the year 1780, was in company with two others, who were in the same predicament with myself, and we took advantage of their sleep to dispatch them with the gun and tomahawk. Five of them I killed with my own hand, and wounded another in the neck, as he was fleeing from me."

The officer then remarked that he recollected the circumstance of a warrior's coming in, wounded in the manner he described.

Van Campen continued further—"I consider myself a prisoner of war to the British, and I trust they have more honor than to deliver me up, to be tortured to death by the savages. But your Colonel must be aware that, if my life is taken we have it in our power to retaliate; for we have the officers of two of your armies, who have submitted to American valor, and

from these it will be easy to repay any indignity which may be paid to her officers by the opposing power."

The officer replied that this was a question which his Colonel would decide, and taking his hat, to depart, Van Campen detained him, saying that he had a request to make. "What is it sir?" he replied.

"I wish you to furnish me with a scalping knife, a scabbard and string."

"What do you mean to do with them?"

"I will hang the string around my neck, and conceal the knife in my bosom, and then if any of your Indian warriors come to pay me a visit, I shall know their errand, and if it is to make me the victim of their rage, it will be at the expense of *their* lives or *mine*, for I would rather die the death of a soldier, than be tortured at the stake."

The officer replied that the Indians were his allies and he dared not do it, because should he be discovered he would forfeit his honor and lose his commission. Van Campen rejoined—"If they kill me it will forever remain a secret, and if my life is spared, I will pledge my honor that you shall never be exposed."—Making no promise he immediately departed.

Van Campen's feelings at this period would be poorly represented by a description. Certain it was that the savages were intent upon taking his life, and *that*, by no easy process. Should his hold upon the things of earth, be torn from him by piece meal, as in the case of the unfortunate Boyd, how excruciating would be his pangs! His fate hung upon the decision of the British Colonel, and could he have the hardihood to

give him up to torture? But, for fourteen prisoners in his stead, what might he not be tempted to do?—Such were some of Van Campen's thoughts as he paced his little apartment revolving in his mind the uncertainty of his present situation.

In a short time, however, the officer returned bringing with him the articles for which Van Campen had made a request, and setting a bottle of wine on the table, invited him to take a glass with him, at the same time remarking that he had brought back a favorable report.

Van Campen expressed his gratification and inquired what the report was. To which he was answered that Col. Butler had directed him to say that there was no alternative for him to save his life, but to abandon the rebel service and join the British. "If you will do so" said he, "the Colonel will give you the same rank in the British army, that you hold in the *rebel cause*."

Van Campen replied indignantly—"No sir, no. GIVE ME THE STAKE, THE TOMAHAWK, OR THE SCALPING KNIFE, SOONER THAN A BRITISH COMMISSION."

Their conversation ended here, and Van Campen was left several days in suspense, not knowing at what moment he might be summoned before an Indian tribunal, or how soon he should behold the torch and fagot lighted around him. But discovering that a British guard had been placed at his door, he supposed that it was sent there for his protection, and he began to indulge himself with the hope of greater security.

He next received a visit from the wife of a British officer by the name of Pry. Hearing a wrap against

the door, he sprang upon his feet, brought his hand to his bosom, and was ready to seize his knife should the occasion demand it; then giving the word "come in," awaited the appearance of his guests. As the door opened his eyes rested upon a female very prettily dressed, followed by a British officer. Apprehending no danger from such visitants, he withdrew from the attitude of defense, and as the lady approached him and drew aside her veil, he recognised an old acquaintance and school mate. He expressed his pleasure at this unexpected meeting, and she in turn represented her joy in seeing him, but added her regret that it should be under such trying circumstances. She remarked that the Indians had brought very weighty accusations against him, that she had been to her Colonel, to intercede for his life, and that she was permitted to say from him, that his life would be spared, in case of his submission to the terms that had been offered him before.

Van Campen replied that he could not consent to make such a disposal of himself; that his life belonged to his country, and that he would sooner suffer all the cruelties and indignities which the unrelenting savages could inflict upon him, than accept of the terms on which his life had been promised.

The lady regreted his obstinacy in not complying with the liberal terms that had been proposed, and set forth in glowing colors the dignity of the royal army, representing it as being far more honorable to hold a commission in the British service than to be an officer among the rebels.



Van Campen replied that his views and her's were very different, and that with his present feelings—the *knife, the tomahawk, or the stake*, would be far more acceptable than all the honors of a British commission. With this the conversation ceased, and he was left to muse in silence, over the probable course that would be taken in his case, and as he reflected upon the determined spirit of the Indian, and upon the avidity with which he is accustomed to pursue his desire of revenge, he felt that nothing would be left untried, to obtain possession of his person, and their point once gained, he could easily imagine the events that would follow. No punishment would be too severe; no inhumanity too great to be exercised against one who had slain a fellow warrior. He heard indeed, that their preparations of torture were already made, that sharpened fagots had been prepared to drive into his body and then set them on fire, under the expectation that he would be delivered into their hands.

But fortunately he was not delivered over to the tender mercies of the savage. In a few days he was placed on board of a vessel bound for Montreal. A guard accompanied him from his lodgings to the wharf, to prevent his being retaken by the Indians, who began to collect in great numbers around the garrison, as soon as it was rumored that he was to be sent away. Yet he reached the vessel in safety, and among those who treated him with kindness, was Capt. Pry and his lady, by whom he was favored with an introduction to the Captain of the boat, recommending him to his attention as one for whom they had an espe-

cial regard, and who furnished him with an ample supply of provisions until he should be quartered among the prisoners at Montreal.

On the next morning after entering the vessel her anchor was weighed, her sails unfurled, and as she gently bowed to the breeze, and began to move down the lake, Van Campen stood upon her deck and with a joyful heart saw himself wafted from a scene, which to him had been one of extreme danger and trial.

Arriving at Montreal he was ushered into the presence of about forty of his countrymen, who were, like himself prisoners. They were assembled in what was called the guard-house, a large building, some seventy or eighty feet in length, and about thirty or forty in width, and was appropriated to the use of the prisoners and of British soldiers, who had them in charge. Within the dark walls of a prison, shut out from the light of day, only as it came struggling through iron grates, Van Campen found a company of men possessing spirits, congenial with his own, and he soon formed an acquaintance, which, from a similarity of fortunes, ripened into the warmest attachment. There were men here from several of the different states, some of whom had been taken, like himself, by the Indians, in their sudden and wary attacks upon the border settlements. Van Campen's coming among them was regarded with no little interest; all gathered around the new prisoner to learn the story of his capture.

They did not, however, surrender themselves to the ill-bodings of despair. The success of their country's

arms, inspired them with hope, and led them with joy to think of the day as not far distant, when the American banner would wave in triumph over the proud pennon, which held in the gale the boasted strength of the British Lion. They began to anticipate the return of peace, and as if to place at defiance the forms existing around them, this little band of prisoners in the very heart of British authority, proposed the establishment of a Republican Government. They determined to regulate their affairs so long as they remained in prison, according to the pure principles of democracy. They chose from their number seven representatives, who met in a body by themselves to consult for the interests of the whole, and the principal subjects that came before them for their consideration, were such as related to the internal regulations of the prison.

One thing, among others, upon which they brought their skill of legislation to bear, was the enactment of laws concerning the preparation of their diet. This consisted of a given quantity of peas and pork a day for each one of the prisoners, who were obliged to act as their own cooks. It was very gravely presented to the body, which was called to preside over the affairs of this little community, that the preparation of their meals was a subject, which demanded an immediate and serious attention. Several plans were proposed, and advocated with all the warmth of eloquence, in the presence of the people; but that which seemed to receive the highest favor was one which corresponded the most perfectly with their ideas of equality. It was that each one should act as cook in turn, be-

ginning with those who held the lowest rank as officers, and ascending to the highest until all had been made to serve. It had been found by experience, that if the peas and pork were put on to boil at the same time, the latter which required much less time in cooking, would be boiled to pieces before the peas would be in an eatable condition. It was therefore enacted as a solemn law, that the peas should be put over the fire first, and that after they had boiled a given length of time, the pork should also be subjected to the operation of heat. But it was further ascertained that the pork was somewhat rusty, and it was made the duty of the cook to cut this off before boiling. A failure to comply with these laws or any delinquency in the acting cook, subjected the offender to a trial and to such punishment as the people thought proper to pronounce in his case.

Under the operation of these laws their culinary affairs advanced prosperously, and not until it came to be the turn of one who had held the office of Major, was there the least opposition to the regulations that had been made. He began to plead exemption from performing the duties of cook, on account of his being a field officer. In answer to this he was reminded of the fact that he was under a Republican Government, *that all were on an equality and that he could have no excuse for not performing his duty.*

He therefore complied with the regulations, but it was evidently with great reluctance, and so miserably did he act his part that when that little Democracy assembled around the dinner table, their fare was in

such a wretched condition that none of them could eat.

It was found that the Major had not regarded the rule about putting the peas into the kettle first, but had tumbled in peas and pork at the same time. Neither had the rust been removed from the pork, and besides, he had allowed the dinner to get burnt, so that the accusations against the Major were quite numerous, and he was immediately arraigned before the appointed tribunal. The charges were tabled and after hearing the statements on both sides, the evidence appeared to be decidedly against him, the verdict was brought in—"guilty," he was sentenced to be cobbled, and was accordingly laid across a bench with his face downwards, and the magistrate taking hold of one end of his shoe, proceeded to administer the given number of blows.

The Major complained bitterly of his treatment; he was so much dissatisfied that he entertained serious thoughts of rebelling against the government.—and as there was no one discontented but himself, he resolved on forming an *aristocracy* in the midst of this nest of republicans. He nailed his blanket up between a couple of joists in the prison, and throwing himself into this, remained most of the time alone, not mingling with the common herd, and being emphatically above the majesty of the sovereign people.

While the Major was occupying his chosen quarters in his suspended blanket, removed from the bustle and turmoil of the little world below, yet not so far as to be unacquainted with what was transpiring around him, there was a plan formed by the prison-



ers, to effect their escape by rising upon the British guard. They matured their purpose, so far as to engage some of the Canadians, who were favorable to the American cause, to furnish them with boats to conduct them across the river St. Lawrence, intending after they had gained the opposite shore, to enter the State of Vermont by the way of Lake Champlain, and thence to proceed to their several homes.

The day and the hour were appointed, and the parties for attack selected—one to fall upon the sentries, another to dispatch or secure the guard. Just as they were about to put their designs into execution, the courage of one who was to act a conspicuous part, failed him, and receiving the signal to withdraw, instead of the one for attack, Van Campen and a few others with him, who were appointed to take care of the sentries, returned with chagrin to inquire into the cause of this change in their anticipated movements. They were told by a Capt. White, who had been appointed to lead the other party—"that it was too hazardous and it had better be abandoned."

This scheme was followed by another, somewhat different in its character, but more intimately connected with the Major who still swung in his blanket.—The political birth day of American freedom was drawing near, and the prisoners determined to celebrate the anniversary of their National Independence. But they were destitute of the means of observing it according to their ideas of propriety. This difficulty was removed by one of the number, who informed them that, if they would provide him with some quick sil-

ver, and a few old coppers, he would give them a coin that would pass for an English shilling. A Canadian friend supplied these, and whenever their market boy went to purchase provisions, he took of the new coin to buy a small quantity of vegetables, and receiving change in return, expended it for brandy which he brought into the prison, by concealing it in his basket. In this way the prisoners had collected a good sized keg full of liquor, and kept it in readiness for their anticipated holiday.

Only ten of them. Van Campen among the number, dared enter upon the plan of celebration, and these determined to carry it through, even though their imprisonment should, on this account, be attended with ten-fold rigor. The others feared the consequences of the undertaking and declined having any part in the festivities which had been prepared for the occasion.

The Fourth of July at length came, and it was never, perhaps, hailed with more heart felt expressions of joy, than by that small party who, within the dark walls of a Canadian prison, hailed the feeble light that came streaming in through the iron casements as the herald of a brighter day, whispering the mild accents of hope.

This small company of avowed patriots brought forward their entertainment at an early hour, and it was not long before their joy began to expend itself in the loud and merry laugh, and the Hessian soldiers who were that day on guard, very often sent some of their number into the upper room where the prisoners

were assembled, to command order. These commands becoming at length rather too frequent and troublesome, one of their number was stationed at the trap door by which their apartment was entered, with the direction to shut it upon the first man who attempted to come with order of "*silence*." Beginning soon to grow noisy, one or two soldiers came running up, and as they began to rise above the floor, the keeper slammed the door upon their heads and knocked them down the stairs. The next order that came was from the mouth of the Hessian guns, several of which were discharged up through the floor, but fortunately without injury to the prisoners.

Splinters from the fractured floor were thrown about the room at so lively a rate that the unruly prisoners began to think seriously of observing greater silence. They were therefore, for a time, quite orderly, and as night began to draw near, Van Campen proposed that they should invite the suspended Major down to their evening's entertainment. The suggestion was approved by the others and the inquiry was made—"How shall it be done?" "In military style, of course," replied Van Campen. Directing two of them therefore, to sharpen their knives, and being prepared, he gave the order—"MAKE READY,—TAKE AIM,—FIRE!" As the last word was pronounced, the two who were holding their knives, applied them to the sides of the blanket, and out came the Major, head first, to join the party at the table. The Major was received with loud shouts of applause; the prison rang with acclamations, and merry cheers re-

sounded from every quarter. But to the poor Major it proved a more serious disaster than they had anticipated. Falling upon a bench in the room, one or two of his ribs were somewhat fractured, and he was taken away to the hospital to receive medical attention. It was not, however, without leaving a threat to expose all who had been the actors in this scene.

He was true to his word ; on the next morning an officer came into the prison, with a list of names upon a piece of paper, the first of which was Van Campen's. As the ten who had been engaged in celebrating the fourth, were called out together, the others began to congratulate themselves that they were not of the party, and as they were led out of the prison, they followed them with an anxious look, anticipating the most serious consequences. They were brought into a Court Martial of British officers, and Van Campen being requested by the others to represent their case for them, determined, if their conspiracy should have been revealed, to deny it, unequivocally, since it would at once decide their fate.

When paraded before the officers, Van Campen's name was called, and upon answering, he was told that he and his party had been arraigned for misconduct in prison, and that the first charge against them, was for a conspiracy to destroy the British guard.

Van Campen believing that the crisis demanded a denial of the fact, answered firmly—"It's a *lie*, *there is not a word of truth in it.*"

The British officer then proceeded to enumerate the charges consequent upon the celebration

Fourth of July. He replied there was a little more worth in this, that himself and some of his comrades had thought it proper not to pass over their National Holiday, with out giving it some little attention, and they had accordingly done all that, under the circumstances, could, to keep it in remembrance. He then related the story of their celebration, the regulations that had made in their Republican Government, the manner in which the Major had been punished for not conforming to the laws, the offence he had taken, deserting his abode in the blanket, and in short, gave such a graphic history of the whole affair, that all of the officers were thrown from their gravity as judges, and began to laugh regarding it as a subject of the utmost amusement.

While he was engaged in the narration, a young Officer, a officer, who seemed to take a deep interest in the story, came around and stood close by Van Campen, that he might hear every word that was uttered, and when he had ended, Van Campen turned to him and inquired if he was acquainted with any of the Hessians, officers taken with the army of Burgoyne, who had been stationed in Berks County, Pennsylvania. To which he answered in the affirmative. Van Campen then informed him that while an officer there, he had often invited them to dine with him, that others had paid them the same attention, they being allowed the honor of a parole, and that he thought the same privilege should be allowed to the American officers.

The young officer then represented the case to his General and was informed that it would be taken into



consideration, and an answer given on the next day.

Without giving them any censure, therefore, the prisoners were told that they might appear before them again, and they would then be informed whether they could be allowed the privilege of a parole. Upon returning to the prison they resolved not to inform their fellows of the result of this summons, but to keep it as a secret among themselves, revealing only this—that their case would be decided on the morrow.

On the next day, when the officer came to conduct Van Campen and his comrades from the prison, they assumed the appearance of concern, and bade their companions farewell, as though they never expected to meet them again in this world. The others sympathized deeply with their fate, at the same time feeling that they had themselves happily escaped a sentence, which they supposed would be death. Upon coming before the British officers, Van Campen and his comrades were informed that they could have the privilege of the streets of Montreal during the day, if they would consider themselves in honor bound to return to the guard-house for lodgings at night. To this they readily agreed, and were happy in the thoughts of again breathing the open air of heaven, without receiving it through the iron grates of a prison. Thus ended this tragic affair, but it was not without chagrin that those who through fear of punishment, refused to participate in the honors paid to the hallowed day of freedom, beheld their companions who had the hardihood to commit so great an offence, permitted on this very account, to enjoy a liberty denied to themselves.

Soon after this, Van Campen and the nine who were with him on parole, were sent to the island of Orleans, five miles below Quebec, and remaining here until November, were placed on board of a vessel bound for New York, and after a dangerous voyage of five weeks, arrived in safety at their place of destination. Here a British commissary came on board of their vessel and began to inquire of the prisoners concerning the treatment they had received. All of them told in turn a very doleful story, finding much fault with their treatment and making a great variety of complaints, until he came to Van Campen, the last whom he examined. As he came up to him he said, rather impatiently, "Well, sir, have yet *any* complaints to make?"

Supposing it to be altogether useless to offer any, even though he had been treated ever so ill, he replied—"Not at present, sir; but I soon may have."

"Ah, upon what grounds will you make your complaint?"

"Why, sir, if you don't send us on board, ten gallons of wine, a quarter of fresh beef, and a good supply of fresh bread, I *shall* complain of you."

The officer took him by the hand, and shaking it heartily, replied—"If this still you shall *have* it, sir—you shall have it;" and, true to his word, he soon sent him the articles he had named. As long as the wine and beef lasted, the prisoners found no fault with their fare.

Gen. Carleton then proposed to let them go to their own country on parole, they pledged themselves

not to take up arms against His Majesty, the King, and that they would repair to whatever point or place his Generals should call them, and placing them on board of a cartel-ship, sent them up the North river to the American lines. The officer of this vessel perceiving that they had a good supply of wine with them, began to treat them very civilly, inviting them into his own cabin, and becoming a guest with them. They here enjoyed themselves exceedingly, and having permission to sing some of their songs, they sung several which were replete with burlesque upon the British arms, and as these drew forth the loud and merry laugh, the Captain would join in with the rest, and before he placed his passengers on shore, he was so much pleased with the company of the prisoners, that he was willing himself almost to be called a rebel.

Upon coming on shore and into the society of their own countrymen, Van Campen and his fellow prisoners found themselves at some distance from their immediate friends and with scarcely a penny in their pockets to bear the expenses of a journey. They each had a blanket however, and disposing of these, raised a little money and with this began to proceed on foot towards their homes. In passing through New Jersey they staid over night at a public house, where the landlord requested them to leave their names before starting in the morning, stating that inquiries were often made concerning prisoners who were returning home, and that he wished to have it in his power to gratify any friend who might desire information about them.

They had been gone but about an hour, when one

of the inhabitants came in, and began to inquire of the landlord, if there was any news. "None," said he, "but the passing by of a few prisoners, who staid with me the last night."

"Can you give me their names?"

He presented him with the list of these, and upon beholding Van Campen's, declared that he must see him, "For," said he, "I was at Northumberland soon after one by that name was taken prisoner, and every man, woman and child was lamenting his loss, and this must be the same person; if I can be of any assistance to him, I will." Learning that they had been gone but a short time, he mounted his horse and pursued on after them.

Upon coming in sight of the prisoners, he called to them, requesting them to halt, and as he drew near, inquired for Van Campen. Answering to his name, Van Campen stepped forward and demanded his wish.

Upon receiving from him the name of the place where he had been taken captive, the stranger informed him of his having heard of him before, and inquired if he had with him what money he wanted to bear his expenses on his way home. Van Campen replied that money was at that time a very scarce article with him, and thereupon the stranger handed him half a joe (about eight dollars) saying that it was all he had with him, and that as he had a family to support, and was expecting to remove into the vicinity of Northumberland, he might have the privilege of returning it to him again if he chose. Van Campen thanked him for his kindness, and promised to do so with interest, as

he afterwards did. With this addition to their purse the prisoners proceeded on their way with a lighter heart, and upon arriving at Princeton, the Free-Masons learning their history and apprised of the fact that one or two of them belonged to their society, called a meeting, at which they raised funds sufficient to hire a carriage, in which they were conveyed to Philadelphia. They were a rare looking company for the elegant vehicle in which they rode and were much amused on the way by the curiosity which their appearance universally excited.

At Philadelphia Lieut. Van Campen received his quarter's pay, procured a suit of uniform, for which he exchanged his Canadian dress, and returning to Northumberland, was welcomed by his friends with the highest demonstrations of joy.



## CHAPTER XII.

*Van Campen returns to the service of his country in the spring of 1783—Takes charge of Wilksbarre Fort—Leads a party to intercept the Indians, in pursuit of plunder—An incident—Retires from service. A brief survey of his history since—Conclusion.*

From the time of Lieut. Van Campen's return home, which was in the month of January 1783, until early in the spring, he was mostly occupied in visits, which this season allowed him to make among his friends. While journeying in the upper part of Pennsylvania for this purpose, he received a letter from Capt. Robison informing him that an exchange had been made between prisoners, so that he could enter into service, and that he must now return to duty. Making his preparations therefore he immediately directed his course towards Northumberland, and upon arriving there was sent with a company of men to take charge of Wilksbarre Fort.

He was stationed here to protect the inhabitants from the continued depredations of the Indians, who, though peace had been established between America and Britain, still continued to infest the region of the border settlements, that they might plunder whatever objects came within their reach. But the mere presence of a military force was not sufficient to prevent the mischief of these troublesome neighbors,

who crept cautiously up to the quiet farm-house and watching their opportunity drove away cattle and horses.

Soon after Van Campen had taken charge of Wilks-barre Fort, Capt. Robison arrived to receive the command himself, while he directed the former to proceed up the Susquehanna as far as Queen Easter's Flatts, with a company of men and there lay in wait that he might intercept parties of Indians who were infesting the country for the purpose of plunder. Selecting his men, he proceeded up the river in a boat, with provisions and the equipages of the camp and soon pitched his tent at the appointed place. Remaining here a few days without making any discoveries, curiosity led him one day to go and examine his old battle-ground, at Hog-back Hill, which was but a few miles above, on the river. He was accompanied by none of his party and had gone about five-miles, when he heard, at a short distance from him, the tramping of a horse. Supposing an enemy to be near, he threw himself under the cover of a thick growth of bushes and awaited his approach. Just then there hove in sight a beautiful horse, mounted by one of elegant appearance, in the British dress. The first notice he had of the presence of Van Campen, was as he saw him in the path before him, aiming his rifle at his head, giving the order—"Halt!"—He checked his horse and his hand dropped immediately upon a holster pistol. "*Draw a pistol,*" said Van Campen, "*and you are a dead man!*" He then received the order—"Dismount, sir!"

The rifle was still pointing towards him and he obeyed.  
—“*Tie your horse!*”

The horse was tied.—“*Right about face,—march!*”  
He wheeled and marched.—“*Halt!*”—He halted.

Van Campen then went to his horse, untied him and with his rifle in one hand and the reins in the other, mounted. He then took one of the pistols from its place, and finding it loaded, cocked it and directed his prisoner to march in front. As he passed, he gave a wishful look at the bridle, as though he would seize the reins. Van Campen said—“*Touch the reins, sir, and I will blow your brains out!*” Submitting quietly, he began to march on before Van Campen, and the latter inquiring his name and business, the other replied—Allen, and that he was on his way to Congress, from the Six Nations, for the purpose of making a treaty of peace.

Upon coming to the Flatts, Van Campen's soldiers discovered him riding an elegant grey horse, marching his man before him. The Sergeant paraded his soldiers immediately in front of the tents and as he came up gave him the military salute and inquired—“Where did you get that bird?” Van Campen replied that he caught him on the waters of the Chemung, a little below their old battle-ground. Dismounting, he gave the horse into the care of one of his soldiers and invited Allen into his tent, examined his papers and found that he had given a true account of his business. He then remarked to him—“Allen, your name is regarded with so much infamy by the inhabitants of the country through which you are to pass, on account of

your more than savage cruelty, exercised among the defenseless families of the frontiers, that when once they hear of your presence, they will certainly put you to death ; and that you may go on upon your business in safety, I will break up my camp and conduct you beyond Wilksbarre."

He therefore made his arrangements in accordance with this determination, descended the river to Fort Wilksbarre and conducted Allen into the Fort. He had not been here long however, before the intelligence was spread among the inhabitants that Allen had been captured and was in the Fort ; and coming up in a mass they demanded that he should be surrendered. So determined were they upon getting possession of Allen, that though Van Campen used his utmost influence to dissuade them from their purpose, showing them the importance of an Indian treaty and that until one was formed they could not expect to occupy their farms in safety, it was with the greatest reluctance that they withdrew from the Fort.

On the next day Van Campen accompanied Allen with a guard until he was beyond the probable reach of danger, and proceeding on his way, he arrived safely at Congress, and made arrangements by which a treaty was concluded with the Indians, during the succeeding summer.

Lieutenant Van Campen returned to Fort Wilksbarre, where he continued in command until the month of November, when upon receiving news that the terms of peace had been ratified, the army was disbanded and he retired from military



life, to engage in the duties of a private citizen.

Soon after having become relieved from the cares and dangers of a soldier, he married the daughter of Mr. James McClure, a wealthy farmer in the neighborhood of Northumberland, who had been removed from his family by death, and Mr. Van Campen undertook the superintendence of his estate and continued to cultivate his farm for several years, when he purchased a considerable tract of land in the neighborhood of what was called Briar's Creek. Removing to his own lands he became a resident there for five years, when he sold his farm, reserving a lot of sixty acres which he promised to an evangelical society upon condition of their building a church, and the terms being complied with, he gave a deed of the land as he had proposed.

From this part of Pennsylvania he removed in 1795, to the State of New York, selecting a portion of its territory that was just beginning to be occupied by settlers. This part of the country was at that time a wide spread wilderness, and occupied by only here and there an inhabitant, who had forced his way into a dense forest, there kindled his fire and commenced the labor of felling the tree. Not discouraged by the hardships which he was assured would meet him at his very entrance into a country that was entirely new,\* Major Van Campen cheerfully undertook the toils

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\* The reader has already been informed that this title was given him very soon after the war of the revolution.



and privations attending his removing to an uninhabited region and selected for his residence a place near what is at present the village of Angelica.

The knowledge which Mr. Van Campen had acquired of the art of surveying, and his skill with the compass were of no small service to him in the new country to which he had removed. He was first employed by Col. Williamson, agent of the Poultney estate; afterwards by Philip Church Esq., and within a few years, he surveyed no less than one hundred and fifty thousand acres, dividing the most of it into small lots, which kept him in the constant exercise of physical and mental labor. Besides this, he was appointed surveyor and commissioner of many very important roads, for which large sums of money were placed in his hands to be expended with integrity and judgment. By these employments he was kept constantly engaged in a life of the greatest activity, and confidence once reposed in him, was never lost, so that this alone would be a sufficient evidence of the fidelity with which he discharged whatever he undertook.

In 1807 he was appointed one of the Judges of Allegany County, was treasurer of the County for fifteen years, and in 1808 received from the State the office of Commissioner of Loans for that county, which office he continued to hold until his removal to the village of Dansville, Livingston County, which was in 1831. As far as he has served his country in a public capacity, it has been with a character unimpeached, and as a private citizen, he has enjoyed in no ordinary de-

gree the affection and esteem of his fellow men.

Maj. Van Campen still resides at Dansville, and though he has already reached his eighty-fifth year, he yet retains the full possession of his mental powers, and enjoys a firmness of health, which could only result from a constitution naturally strong, and habits of life strictly temperate. He has for a number of years been a member of an evangelical church, and has in every respect maintained an example worthy of his profession. In looking over his life and in hearing him converse, his mind gathering a new impulse as it wanders back to the scenes of his youth, and his whole frame kindling as it were with the renewal of his age whenever he may chance to dwell upon some period in the past, in which danger has brought the warm blood to course quick through his veins, or as he may pass from the season of trial, to an occasion of lighter mood, and present in a vivid picture an array of form and a happy union of events, which have gladdened the hour of mirth, he seems to stand as the representative of another age, and "to hear him speak, is to hear the voice of other times."\*

In reviewing his life we find that within the compass of his years there have been crowded a series of events which rarely transpire in the history of one individual. In early life he beheld with an indignant spirit, the wrongs inflicted upon his native land, and

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\* Letter of Hon. H. O'Reiley, in which he speaks of Major Van Campen and Major Adam Hoops, who are still survivors of the revolution.

engaged with ardor in the determination to resist the oppression of a foreign power ; he gathers around him a company of spirits congenial with his own, and they are trained from week to week for the conflict in view ; the strife commences, the little band separates, one to advance against the foe which breaks in upon them at the North, another to pour his life-blood upon the Eastern coast, himself to nerve his arm in a conflict with the cruel and relentless savage. The whole nation is in arms ;—it disclaims allegiance to its mother land ;—the contest becomes doubtful ; it is still continued, yet ten thousand hearts are wrung with anguish, at the cruelties of a barbarian hand.—He, too, becomes a victim to the inhuman foe ;—witnesses the agony of a father's death, a brother falls under the hatchet by his side and himself just escapes with life. He is led captive from his home ; night lays the dusky warriors to rest and in the silence of a slumbering hour, the tomahawk fixes them in the embraces of death. One starts from sleep,—he is pursued with the deadly weapon, it misses his head, but passes into the neck ; a struggle follows between the pursuer and the pursued ; it is for sometime doubtful, and then the two separate from each other. The captive is liberated ;—he returns to his home and is ready again for the field of strife. At length, he becomes a prisoner the second time ; he perils his life for a soldier's,—the hatchet is made to gleam over his head,—it is averted by the admiring warrior. He passes on, more than once meeting with a narrow escape from death, until he is delivered up to the British, and the

warriors repenting of the surrender, claim him back, to subject him to the implements of torture. He is made to choose between the combined elements of savage vengeance on the one hand, and a desertion of his country on the other; he nobly embraces a cruel death. The trying ordeal passes over, he returns to his country, the storm of war has subsided, and he rejoices with a nation that is free.

His life has been spared to behold the several states happily united under the government of his choice, and steadily advancing to the highest rank among the nations of the earth. Principles, whose operation was at first regarded as uncertain, have since been successfully established, and he has been permitted to see in no small measure, the full exercise of that liberty, which he periled his life to secure. He has lived to behold the dense forest gradually giving place to a teeming population, and has witnessed the perfection of those improvements, which are justly regarded with wonder, of the present age. In the place of his old battle-grounds, there now stand the beautiful village, and for the Indian wigwam, is now reared the temple of praise.

Among the scenes which have appeared, to crown with interest the closing days of his life, may be mentioned the ceremonies, lately held at Cuylerville in honor of the illustrious Boyd, and the company under his command, which fell under the sweeping arm of the savage. By the generous patriotism of the citizens of Rochester it was proposed to remove the remains of that gallant band, from an obscure grave, to

the cemetery of Mt. Hope, and there erect a monument, suited to commemorate the noble deeds. Maj. Van Campen was selected as the most suitable person to preside on this interesting occasion. Their relics were enclosed in a sarcophagus, mounted by a beautiful urn. Sixty-two years before, their bones were covered with muscle and sinew, and they had stood by Van Campen's side in the great struggle for liberty. Now, their dust had been gathered, by a sacred devotion, and he, almost the only survivor of the scenes which tried their souls, had come to witness the honors paid to their memory, and to join himself, with the men of another generation, in rendering to them the last tribute of respect. How affecting to him were the thoughts, which clustered around that scene. A few of that company had mingled with him in the sports of his boyhood. Though years had intervened, memory ran back to them, on rapid wings, and gathered in its embraces, the forms of many a loved companion, yet where were they now? Gone, to repose in the silence of the grave. But not all;—a little Spartan band, their leader, Boyd, were to be sought for in the solitude of earth, and brought forth to receive a debt of praise from a posterity who were reaping the fruit of their toils. In the midst of the thousands, who had gathered, as spectators of the scene, Maj. Van Campen, at the close of an oration pronounced upon the noble deeds, which the occasion was intended to commemorate, arose and in a short but appropriate address, surrendered the remains of these his companions in arms, to those who had sought



the honor of giving them a resting place. In that ceremonial he could have the happy assurance, that those who were engaged in the struggles of the revolution were not forgotten, but would have a lasting remembrance in the hearts of an affectionate and grateful people.

THE END.











JAN 15 1931

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